THE ART OF SKATING

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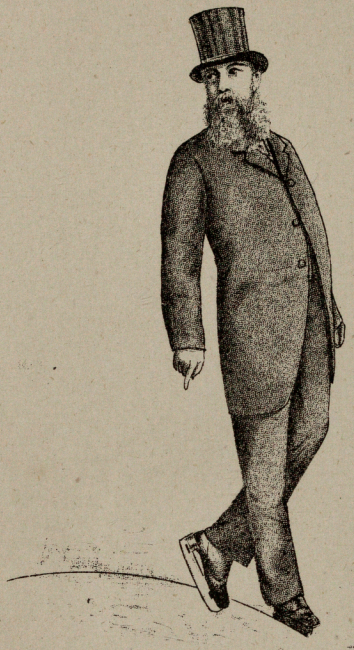

Outside Forwards. (See Page 52)

THE

ART OF SKATING;

WITH

ILLUSTRATIONS, DIAGRAMS, AND
PLAIN DIRECTIONS FOR THE ACQUIREMENT OF THE
MOST DIFFICULT AND GRACEFUL MOVEMENTS.

BY

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FOURTH EDITION.

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HORACE COX,
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PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

THE ardour with which the pastime of skating has been pursued of late years seems to be constantly increasing and spreading; and it is no small satisfaction, both to the author and to the publisher of this work, to be able to claim for themselves some little share in bringing about this result, through having been at least its earliest guides and pioneers.

Shortly, indeed, after the publication of the second edition, but only then, a more important work on the subject appeared, under the joint authorship of two accomplished skaters of the London Club, Messrs. Vandervell and Witham. These gentlemen, in their preface, were pleased to say that, previous to their own, "The Art of Skating," by "Cyclos," was "the only work at all worthy of the art;" and in frequent passages they acknowledged its merits, speaking of it as a work with which "every skater ought to be familiar." The author of the present little book has pleasure in acknowledging that their work was a large advance in the literature of the art, and that, in its highest branches of accomplishment, they bring forward much that he never knew, and which, alas! now he may never hope to acquire, for, as the years creep on, it becomes painfully evident that not only is it doubly difficult

to achieve any new success, but impaired health, nerve, and vigour, make it impossible to retain even the old.

Thus admitting the superiority of Messrs. Vandervell and Witham's work in the highest branches of figure skating, he sees no occasion for "Cyclos" to retire from the field, for, not only does the much lower price (little more than one-third of the other) bring it within reach of a much larger circle of readers, but he conscientiously believes that, for skaters in general, and indeed for all except the select few who are already very far advanced in skating accomplishment, more sound and useful teaching is to be found in the smaller than in the larger work.

Ever since the publication of the first edition, now longer ago than he likes to think of, the author has been carefully studying the art from a didactic point of view, and has had such opportunities of watching instructions to their results, that he is able now either to repeat his old directions with increased confidence, or to give new ones which are better. Perhaps the most curious of these results is the conclusion he has arrived at, that the backward edges and changes to backward, are easier to acquire than the forward edges and changes to forward. For this reason he recommends the lessons for outside backwards to be tried quite as soon as those for outside forwards.

Skating accomplishment has made great strides of late years, and many movements, that were not even thought of a dozen years ago, have become common at good skating centres. Among the best of the new figures are the "loop"

figures, which first appeared in the *Field*, from which they were borrowed for the second edition of this work. The "loop" is admirable practice for giving command of the skate, and is, in the author's opinion, susceptible of considerable further development.

The "Canadian ice rink," an institution of comparatively recent years, seems likely to have very marked influence in extending and developing skating figures—indeed it has already had considerable effect, and one of those effects is in a direction hardly beneficial. On the one hand the extended practice, attainable by means of a rink covered from snow, with ice for many weeks daily renewable, and lighted up for evening skating, must result in more finished performance; but, on the other hand, the circumscribed space has greatly dwarfed the bold sweeps and circles in which the British skater most delights, and has substituted small turns and intricate twists, such as the "grape vine," which, though difficult of attainment, and in themselves very pretty, are not, at least in British opinion, the finest style of skating. The author, however, thinks that Messrs. Vandervell and Witham unduly disparage the Canadian style in speaking of the two-footed figures as mere "tricks," and he looks rather with confidence to the Canadian rinks as likely to produce a high order of skating ability, and to bring out figures that with smaller practice never could have been attempted.

It is not an uncommon belief that skating, like some other things, cannot be taught by book, and that practice, and an

ordeal of hard tumbling, are the only paths to the attainment of proficiency in this accomplishment. So far this is true, that without a great deal of steady practice the best instructions in the world will not make a skater; but it is equally true that proficiency cannot be attained without instructions in addition to practice, and the skater who has the benefit of good instructions, will acquire any figure he wants to learn, in half the time he would spend if left to work it out for himself, and certainly with less than half the falls.

Frequent instructions from a good master would be better than from a book, as the learner does not always know for himself whether he is really following instructions, and is the better of some one who knows, to point out his faults. But to be a good master it is not quite enough to be a good skater, if he has not also studied the best processes for acquiring each given figure. Very fair skaters frequently give instructions so erroneous as to mislead a learner and start him on a wrong track.

Besides that, good skaters are rare; away from the large towns there are but few, and those who have attained proficiency, having probably got at it with much labour, are usually content with the attainment, and do not trouble themselves to consider whether it might not have been got at with less labour in some other way. If good skaters would consider it well, the *modus discendi* might be further simplified. The author only pretends to give the best modes he has seen or discovered; these are not necessarily

the best possible. He has no hesitation in saying, however, that good printed instructions, particularly if accompanied by diagrams to make them comprehensible, are infinitely better than an indifferent teacher; and he is very confident that even country skaters, who have never seen good skating, could in a few years, by practising strictly up to a book, qualify themselves to shine in any company. To do this, however, the directions must be studied day by day as the learner progresses, and they must be attended to in their most minute particulars, as to attitude, position of the feet, &c.

To render still more general, for both sexes and for all classes, the attainment of this graceful, healthful, and exhilarating accomplishment, is the only aim of this treatise; and, in publishing a fourth edition, the author hopes he has succeeded in making his directions and diagrams sufficiently lucid, and that his work will continue to be acceptable to many readers.

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THE

ART OF SKATING.

CHAPTER I.

SKATING.

Pleasures of Skating—Antiquity—Skating in Northern Countries—Distance and Speed—Russia—Norway—America—Anecdote of Indians—Anecdote of Wolves—Canadian Winter—The Ice Rink—British Skating—London—Edinburgh—Glasgow—Skating without Ice—The Plimpton Roller.

Of all the sports and pastimes of winter, of all the pleasures that are anticipated in the Christmas dreams of the emancipated schoolboy, or shine in the bright home visions of the athletic collegian—at that pleasant season of the year when the yule-log burns on the hearth, and the holly hangs in the hall, there is none that holds a higher place or is looked forward to with more keen enjoyment than the delightful pastime of skating. The pleasure may be partly owing to the bracing atmosphere of a fine frosty day, when the very winds seem to have been frozen in the air, for the purpose of covering the bare twigs and branches of the summer-forsaken trees with a hoary foliage of silver, powdering with sparkling diamond dust the limp and scanty grass, and decking with fairy crystals each mean and withered waif from the summer's wreck; or it may be partly the exhilarating exercise, the sense of freedom, and power and speed, and the *gaudia certaminis*, the joy in difficulties

overcome—all these seem to contribute to produce an exulting elasticity of spirit that dissipates the ordinary cares and crosses of life.

Suppose, in the first holiday of Christmas-tide, you have left dry studies or business cares, and run down to the country over night, with snow on the ground and the stars shining splendidly. Then comes the pleasant greeting of home faces, and dreaming once more on home pillows, and you waken to a bright, keen, bracing day, with fern-like fretwork on your window-panes, and feathering on the trees, and the lake covered with a strong sheet of glassy ice. There is the old home breakfast, with loving faces round the table; and then what furbishing of skates, and turning of gimlets, and fitting of straps; and at last you are off—gliding over those clear depths with the speed of a racer—dashing past the islands—wheeling round the bays, or, with more composed evolutions, carving snow-white circles on the undimmed surface—ciphering the virgin page with an unfaltering caligraphy of 3s and 8s. And pleasanter still is all this if fair faces and bright eyes accompany and participate in the enjoyment, as seems the growing practice now—and long may it be so; bright eyes will be all the brighter, and fair faces all the fairer, for the high health and vigour derived from such glorious exercise.

I have heard some invidious detractors sneer at skating, as rather a pastime for a schoolboy than for any man of mature growth. Skaters can afford to laugh at such remarks, which can only come from those who never were good skaters themselves. Narrow-minded people very often affect to despise accomplishments in which they are themselves deficient, for to praise would be to acknowledge their own deficiency, and that would engender a feeling of inferiority, the admission of which would be too great a

trial for their pride, and they find it much easier to slight what they have not than to acquire it. That skating is something more than mere exercise for schoolboys, is best proved by the fact that to become a really good skater requires so much careful practice that in this climate boys do not attain proficiency. In Canada, probably, they may attain it younger than is possible with us; but I have certainly never seen a mere boy who could be called a really good performer.

A pursuit that calls forth the energy and assiduity of a man to accomplish, particularly when not entirely exempt from personal risk, may fairly be called a manly exercise; nor will its adoption by ladies at all detract from that character; for while much grace of movement and some really difficult figures are quite within their reach, in the nature of things they are precluded from the more hazardous wheels and balances.

As to the early history or remote antiquity of the art, I can give the reader very little information. Blaine says:

> Skating, although unquestionably a much more early practice among us, is first noticed in the description of London, by Fitz Stephen, who relates that "when the great fenne or moore (which watereth the walles of the citie on the north side) is frozen, many young men play upon the yce."

Again:

> Some, stryding as wide as they may, doe slide swiftlie; asome tye bones to their feete, and under their heeles, and, shoving themselves by a little picked staffe, doe slide as swiftlie as a birde flyeth in the aire, or an arrow out of a crossbow.

Certainly, this was skating of a very primitive description, and that would not, I think, indicate a much anterior invention.

Blaine also informs us, probably from the same old authority, that

One of their sports was, for two to start a great way off, opposite to each other, and when they met, to lift their poles and strike at each other, when one or both fell, and were carried to a distance from each other by the celerity of their motion.

And he further says:

Of the present wooden skates, shod with iron, there is no doubt we obtained a knowledge from Holland.

They seem to have been introduced into England in Charles the Second's time (about 1662), when the first notice of them appears.

The introduction of iron must have revolutionised, or, indeed, created the art; the bone skate required the "little picked staffe" for propulsion; but the iron enabled the skater to derive propelling power for each foot from the other foot.

In our own country, where the opportunities of skating are rare, and of short continuance, and where the distances that can be traversed on fresh water are so small, skating is purely a pastime, and is therefore cultivated more in the direction of elegance than of practical utility.

But in more northern countries, where the roads are blocked up for months with deep snows, the frozen surfaces of the lakes and rivers form the only roadway; skating and sleighing are the only means of travelling and communication between rather distant places. In this way, the inhabitants, men and women alike, are skaters, and can travel their ten miles an hour with ease, keeping up the pace for several hours.

One of these skaters, however perfect in his own line, would make no appearance whatever in any of our British clubs; and, in the same way, I fear, *our* finest performers would be utterly distanced in the skating races of the

North, where they contest for victory on a thirty-mile course.

A Dutch woman skating to market, will carry her baby, and a basket of eggs, twenty miles of a morning; and in winter, the Amsterdam market for country produce is largely supplied by skaters.

Sleighs, pushed by skaters, or drawn by horses, or dogs, or even impelled by sails, are used for the same purpose in those countries; and Blaine says that in Lincolnshire something of this sort is done—that skating is put to a practical use. He also tells us that a Lincolnshire man, for a wager of a hundred guineas, skated a mile in three minutes.

In speaking of speed, he mentions another remarkable instance, that of an officer having skated from Montreal to Quebec in one day! which, he says, "considering the state of the ice on these large rivers, was a wonderful performance." Wonderful enough, certainly, to make me somewhat sceptical, for, whatever might be the state of the ice, the actual distance is 180 miles.

I believe a mile in three to three and a half minutes is very quick work—even one in four minutes is not bad—and for endurance, twelve or fourteen miles in an hour; though skaters practising for running may occasionally exceed that.*

In this country we mostly make summer our holiday-time, for in winter we have so much wet weather, that a clear frosty day can never be reckoned on till it comes. But in other countries, particularly where the employment of the people is wholly agricultural, the winter, which brings its repose to the soil, brings its rest and rejoicing to

* These old opinions of mine as to speed may be confirmed or modified by the Race meetings of the National Association referred to in Chapter VII.

the people also. Labour has laid aside her sickle, and garnered its fruits, and the time for the plough is still distant; why should she not feast and be merry?

In Russia the winter is especially a festive time. The brilliantly illuminated and furnished ice palaces of the Neva, with their feasting, and music and dancing—the artificial twin ice hills, down one of which the sledge rushes thundering with such velocity as carries it entirely up the other—with skating, and sleighing, and all sorts of ice amusements, mark the progress of the Russian winter.

In Norway and Sweden, and round the shores of the Baltic, the hardy hunter follows the chase on skates; and his speed and facility in turning, enable him to attack, and avoid retaliation from, the ferocious wolf, till the quarry is brought down with repeated wounds.

The American skater sometimes owes his preservation to his speed and endurance on the irons. There is a well-known story of a settler in the Far West, who was taken captive by the Indians, and after some days of bondage and torture, was shown a pair of skates that had been included in the plunder of his village. His captors, ignorant of their use, asked him to show them; a beam of hope cheered his despairing heart as, with trembling hands, he proceeded to fasten them on. He soon got on the ice, and commenced shuffling and tumbling about fantastically, but taking care gradually to move farther from the shore, the unsuspecting Indians laughing at his awkwardness.

They were then upon the far shore of one of the immense lakes of that vast continent: and the sheet of ice that stretched before the skater's gaze, ended only in the horizon.

When he thought himself far enough away, he fell for the last time, and bound the skates more firmly to his feet, then,

rising, he stretched out at full speed, while the Indians scarcely recovered from their astonishment in time to send after him a few random bullets, which bounded and tinkled along the ice harmlessly.

Still, though free, he was not out of danger; he had a vast desert to traverse without food or shelter, exposed to the chance attack of wolves, or still more remorseless Indians; and frequently turned from his course for miles, by some wide crevasse, till he could find a spot narrow enough to leap over. But after journeying in this manner for two days and nights, when exhausted and despairing, he fortunately fell in with a trapper, who guided him to a settlement.

More recently an incident happened to a Canadian settler, in which his skates, though they certainly led him into the danger, also bore him safely out of it.

His habitation lay on the banks of a river, and, being fond of skating, he had gone out alone one fine moonlight night to enjoy it.

The moon shone with unusual splendour, rendering more faint the brilliancy of the myriads of stars, which, in so clear an atmosphere, shone like diamond points, deep set in the interminable blue. The ever-varying aurora-borealis, so magnificent in that climate, would ever and anon come shooting up from the horizon in crescents, and columns, and domes of many-coloured light, till the whole zenith would become splendidly irradiated, and the ear could connect with the flashes "a sound as of silken banners shaken in the wind;" these shapes changing as suddenly to narrow streamers, and thin flakes of shooting and floating light, ever brightening, ever darkening.

The ice was smooth and clear, and reflected in its motionless mirror the radiance of the heavens, and the deep

shadow of the primeval forest, which stretched gloomily on either side.

Tempted by the beauty of the night, he had wandered rather far from home, and had entered one of the many smaller creeks that joined the river: here his path gradually darkened, for, as the stream grew narrow, the tall old trees met and interlaced overhead.

Suddenly, from the brush at his side, came a low growl, and, looking round, he saw two fierce eyes glaring bluely at him through the darkness; anon, others and others, on all sides, and closer, till he thought he could feel the hot breath of the hungry wolves which were closing round him. Instant flight was his only chance for life, and, turning, he rushed for home. The wolves followed, and the chase was a quick and a hot one; for a time the skater kept well ahead, and many of his pursuers gave up the chase. He was approaching his home, and could at last even see the light from his window glancing occasionally through the forest; but he felt that his powers were nearly exhausted, and some of the wolves were still closing on his track, with their long lumbering gallop that never tired. He saw his home before him, and heard the welcome sound of his watch-dogs barking. Oh, for one minute of Lion or Ranger—but alas! they were chained, and could render no help. The wolves were at his heels, and, without any other thought than that of meeting his fate, he turned sharp to one side. The foremost wolf made a dash at him, but, unable to check its velocity on the slippery ice, it slid past him, as did the rest; and the skater found himself with a fresh start, and, nerving himself anew, he dashed on. A second time overtaken, he had recourse to the same manœuvre, when, probably frightened by the loud barking of the dogs, the wolves gave up the chase, and, in joy and thankfulness for

his preservation, the settler reached his home, resolved not again to indulge in the romantic at such hazard.

In Canada the winters are particularly severe. The snows that fall in December seldom vanish till May; the intermediate time being mostly occupied with intense frosts, varied, of course, with snow-storms and thaws.

The thermometer ranges from 25° to 30° *below* zero, giving about sixty degrees of frost (in Britain 20° *above* zero, which is twelve degrees of frost, is considered very keen, and we rarely have it lower).

That severity of climate, however, seems almost to add a zest to out-door amusements. Business and labour being alike suspended, all ranks and classes indulge in a general jubilee; skates are sharpened, and sleighs new furbished; and the city inhabitants, late so active in business, now follow pleasure with equal enthusiasm, in which their country friends are in no way behind. Visiting commences in earnest, distance being no consideration; city balls and country junketings, where each guest brings his own dish, are all the rage, and the jingle of the sleigh bells is heard in all directions; the chance of being snowed up, and the many hazards of the road, only adding zest to the fun.

Within the last few years their variable climate has suggested, and their intense and long continued frosts have enabled them to carry out, the idea of covered and inclosed sheets of water which can be kept free from snow, and can have the ice renewed as may be required. These are called "ice rinks," and are, in fact, large sheds inclosed against wind and snow, and lighted with gas, so that the skater can follow his pastime comfortably, day or night, in all weathers except thaw. The result is that the Canadian skater can pretty well count on three months agreeable

skating every winter; and the following extract from the *Quebec Chronicle* shows the sort of programme :—

FANCY DRESS BALL ON THE ICE.—On the 14th ult. the Quebec Skating Club had their grand fancy dress ball at their ice rink. The bugle sounded at nine o'clock, and the motley crowd of skaters rushed on the ice over which they dashed in high glee, their spirits stirred to the utmost by the enlivening music and the cheering presence of hundreds of ladies and gentlemen, including the *élite* of Quebec. Over the glittering floor sped dozens of flying figures, circling, skimming, whirling, and intermingling, with a new swiftness, the bright and varied colours, the rich and grotesque costumes succeeding each other, or combining with bewildering rapidity and effect. The gentlemen, in addition to the usual characters, introduced some novelties—an owl, a monkey, a monster bottle, a tailor at work on his bench, a boy on horseback, all capital representations, and by good skaters. Among the suits of the ladies were representations of "Night" and "Morning," a *vivandière*, a *habitant's* wife, and other characters that appear to advantage. The skaters presented both a varied and brilliant appearance, their parts being well sustained as to costume and deportment, and their movements on the ice being characterised by that grace and skill of movement bred of long practice. The dances included quadrilles, waltzes, gallops, lancers, and so forth, for which there was suitable music from first to last.

Now and then, at rare intervals, the St. Lawrence is completely frozen over at Quebec, and then a grand carnival takes place. Tents and booths are erected, and skating and sleigh racing, and other glacial sports, are the order of the day.

Something of this kind has taken place in London also, when the Thames has been frozen over. A fair was always held on its surface, which lasted with the ice. But this is like a jubilee year, once in half a century, and sure now to be still less frequent as the channel is deepened for navigation.

The London skaters resort mostly to the Serpentine water, in Hyde Park, for their amusement, and when that is well

frozen, the scene is a very animated one, the crowd being sometimes so dense as to preclude much fancy skating. There, however, are to be seen the finest skaters that our country can boast of, and even foreigners, accustomed to the finest execution in their own more practical line, admire the elegance of the English evolutions.*

In Scotland, we must, I fear, acknowledge our inferiority in skating; for, though there are a few good skaters about the large towns, the number is very small, and in country districts the performances are usually very indifferent.

An old encyclopædia, probably written in Edinburgh, gave that city the palm for skating accomplishment, and the reputation has clung to her ever since. I do not believe it ever was merited, or that at any time she could touch London. A few years ago, when I saw the performances of her club, I found them fifty years behind the day, doing nothing whatever beyond outside forward, and even that badly, and acting on the very conservative, but very mistaken, idea that nothing else was worth learning. Till they abandon that idea, there is no hope for them.

The Edinburgh skaters go to Duddingstone Loch, a very pretty sheet of water, to the south of the city, behind Arthur's Seat; and if you take the road over the hill on a fine frosty day, when the ice is bearing, you see as pleasant and lively a scene as can be witnessed anywhere.

The lake is spread out before you, so far below, that you take in the whole surface at a glance; the ice is brilliantly white, for, though there is no snow on the ground, the busy skaters have scraped a surface of snow over the ice. You

* Since this was written the Skating Club has deserted the parks for a private pond; and other clubs have contributed to draw the best skaters to more private waters, so that really good skating is hardly now to be seen in the parks.

do not exactly see what they are doing, but only that they are rushing frantically about, and tumbling over each other, ever in restless motion, just like the denizens of an ant-hill, and almost as numerous. There is a large sprinkling of ladies also, and many of them you see with skates on, and performing very creditably.

I like to see ladies skate; though, no doubt, the early steps must be rather trying to female nerves and female draperies; but more in idea than in reality, for, with careful instructions, a lady may acquire sufficient skill to move about freely without any extensive ordeal of falls. At the same time, where the opportunity can be had of a private pond, these little difficulties may be more easily surmounted.

In Glasgow there are probably fewer skaters than in any town in the kingdom of near its size; the inhabitants are so much engaged with business all day, and there is so total an absence of idle people, that the ice has only a few devotees.

These few, however, form the centre of a very flourishing skating club, who have a very fine pond of their own; and, besides this, there are a number of ponds and small lakes within convenient distance of the city, and, being situated so far from the sea, they have at least three times as many days of ice in each season as the Edinburgh men.*

The Clyde is rarely frozen, and when it is, the ice is usually bad from the rise and fall, caused by the tidal influence, constantly breaking it while forming.

I now quote another passage about Canada, which

* Since this was written both Glasgow and Edinburgh have shared in the general increase and improvement in skating. The skaters in Glasgow are very numerous, and even conservative Edinburgh begins to doubt if her "goose" figure is really the only thing worth doing. As for lady skaters, the increase in them is everywhere most remarkable.

appeared in *Once a Week*, and I do so partly to correct a popular fallacy, and partly to show what rubbish a man may commit himself to, who writes about what he does not understand :—

I was once belated in Canada on a fine winter day, and was riding over the hard snow on the margin of a wide lake, when the most faint and mournful wail that could break a solemn silence seemed to pass through me like a dream. I stopped my horse and listened. For some time I could not satisfy myself whether the music was in the air or in my own brain. I thought of the pine forest, which was not far off; but the tone was not harp-like, and there was not a breath of wind. Then it swelled and approached; and then again it seemed to be miles away in a moment; and again it moaned as if under my very feet—it was, in fact, almost under my feet. It was the voice of the winds imprisoned under the pall of ice suddenly cast over them by the peremptory power of the frost. Nobody there had made air-holes, for the place was a wilderness, and there was no escape for the winds, which must moan on till the spring warmth should release them. They were fastened down in silence; but they would come out with an explosion when, in some still night after a warm spring day, the ice would blow up and make a crash and a racket from shore to shore. So I was told at my host's that evening, where I arrived with something of the sensation of a haunted man. It had been some time before the true idea struck me, and meanwhile the rising and falling moan made my very heart thrill again.

All this fine writing subsides into worse than nothingness when it is known to be founded on a fallacy! No wind ever was, in this world, imprisoned under a sheet of ice! But that there is a popular idea of that sort is undeniable. The author of the above had imbibed the idea somehow, and founded that piece of nonsense upon it.

In similar error, when that lamentable accident happened in one of the London parks some years ago, one of the newspapers (I think it was the *Times*, but am not quite sure) had a leader, in which the cause of the accident was quite scientifically explained to be, that the crowd, having collected more to one end of the pond, the air under the ice

was driven to the other end, where it blew up the ice into fragments, and caused the whole sheet to give way. This is just the "imprisoned winds" over again. Now, the simple fact is, that ice always *floats on the water;* without the water to support it, its own weight would break it immediately; it is, therefore, impossible for any quantity of air to be between the ice and the water. If the ice is depressed by a concentrated crowd there must be displacement of *water,* but the ice on one spot would not bend far enough (without itself breaking) to cause such displacement as to blow up the ice at another place, unless the displaced water was concentrated, and its pressure all brought to bear, on a surface still smaller than the place it was displaced from. Besides, it was where the crowd *was* present that the ice gave way, and the certain explanation of the accident is, that the continued vibration from so many skaters had cracked the ice by degrees into a complete web of cracks, meeting and crossing each other in all directions, till, perhaps, there was not a space of six inches free from them, and the cohesion of the sheet was entirely destroyed. This is what skaters should particularly notice, a few cracks here and there are nothing, but when they become closely interlaced, and when water is rising through them, the ice is no longer safe.

Attempts have frequently been made to invent skating that could dispense with frost, and be practised at any season.

I remember a professor who undertook, for a consideration, to teach a mode of going on iron-wheeled skates, and he certainly did wonders himself, but somehow his pupils made no progress, and then it ceased to pay.

More recently the same idea has been carried out with wheels of vulcanised india-rubber: with these, a light

weight, who has learnt to do it, can, on a smooth wooden floor, really make wonderfully rapid evolutions; it is, however, an accomplishment *sui generis*, and not exactly skating. The wooden editions of the well-known ice figures are not recognisable; circles and large sweeps are not attainable. I have no doubt that learning this accomplishment would be a great assistance to real skating, and *vice versâ*. But having attained the one by no means carries with it the possession of the other.

The implement, however, is very rude and imperfect, and under a heavy weight the wheels crush and stop : perhaps, with larger and firmer wheels, something good may yet come out of it.

It is now many years since these sentences as to "roller skating" were written, for they are in the edition of 1868. The "Plimpton" had not been then invented, and "rinking" was a pastime unknown. The supposition that "something good may yet come out of it," has, however, been abundantly verified, and "roller skating" has become an artistic acquirement. It certainly came in with a rush, became for a time an absolute mania, and for the present seems to have as suddenly departed. Things that depend on fashion are apt to run in extremes, but I do not believe either that it will long remain in the background as it now is, or that it ought to do so. Solely, I think, for certain social reasons, it has got under a sort of ban, through having for a time been indulged in to excess. It will probably, however, recover something of its favour, and re-establish itself on a more moderate footing. In the meantime till some demand springs up again, neither rinks nor rollers of the right kind are to be had.

Mr. Plimpton would, I fancy, do well for himself, to open the sale of his rollers to the public, instead of confining it as hitherto to a few licensed rinks. That game is evidently played out, and not till people find they can get rollers for more private practice, in their tennis courts at country quarters, or in large rooms, will roller skating come into favour again.

It is only, however, as regards its relation to real skating, that anything needs to be said of it here. On that point I wish to say, that while the two are not so entirely the same that the acquisition of either gives the other, they are so similar that the one greatly facilitates the other; and I fully believe that the instructions for learning the one, will prove very nearly as suitable for the other. In fact I do not think it necessary to devote a special chapter to roller skating, satisfied that any one could learn it by careful study of the chapters of instruction in real skating.

That practice on the rollers will greatly aid in learning the ice figures, no one will, I think, deny, and the importance of the aid rests on the brief duration of our periods of ice practice, whereas we can have the rollers, like some less desirable things, "always with us," to "do our spiriting," alike in summer sun or in winter storm.

I therefore advise all young skaters to take to the rollers whenever they get the chance, and to practise diligently; not, however, in the ignoble way of merely running round like mill-horses, for a few times and stopping or turning at the sound of a bell, as seems the usual way, but sedulously working by book for the attainment of figures. In that way, and in that way only, the practice will be of real value as an assistance to ice skating.

CHAPTER II.

THE SKATE.

The common Skate—the Spring Skate—the Glasgow Club Skate—General Considerations—New Varieties—My Own—The Alexandra—Ibbetson's—The Acme—Boot Skates—Skating Boots.

THE ordinary skate is no doubt perfectly familiar to my readers, and requires no description.

It is by no means a perfect implement, but in some respects very deficient. The principal of these defects is, that the wood does not sufficiently adapt itself to the shape of the foot, and is not broad enough to give a steady support, or to prevent its shifting.

The iron also projects beyond the foot in front, and falls short of it at the heel, and therefore is not so well under control as when it exactly follows the length of the foot both ways.

The price varies with the size and quality, running from 3*s*. 6*d*. to 15*s*. a pair.

I recommend the learner, if youthful, to begin with a very cheap pair, and after he has made some progress in the art, and his foot has come near its full size, to abandon this sort of skate entirely for one of the superior kind, which I shall hereafter describe.

In the sale shops, the quality of the fastenings is usually proportioned to that of the skate; but let the iron and wood be as common as the learner pleases, he should have the fastenings good; and for the common cheap skate they should consist of a good screw to go up into the heel, and a small bar of iron across the tread of the foot, an inch

forward from the broadest place, and turned up at the ends to catch the sole of the boot. If the learner has these, the straps will never require to be painfully tightened. Some people like one long strap to go round the foot, through all the holes in the stock, others use a back heel strap in addition. The latter is preferable.

In buying, let him look to the heel screw, and he must himself get the bar put on to fit his own foot; it must project more to one side of the wood than the other, for the outside of the foot, and the skates are then right and left. It is put an inch or more forward from the broadest part of the foot, in order that when you lean over to the outside edge, the corner of the bar may not touch the ice sooner than the corner of the boot-sole at the broadest place would; as otherwise it might cause a bad fall. It must be so placed that the toe of the iron is neither too much to the outside or inside. The bar gives a broader foundation for the foot, and prevents the skate shifting from side to side; and a single day's skating with the three little pikes which are commonly found in its place will do more damage to your boots, by cutting the soles across, than would pay for the alteration four times over, besides the discomfort of constantly drawing the straps till the feet are cramped with them, and the skate shifting in spite of all.

The Patent Spring Skate of Messrs. Rogers and Son, from its light and elegant appearance, was very much used for some years. The fastenings are simple, and quickly adjusted. Instead of a heel screw, there is a pike; and the spring is solely used for keeping this pike in its place, not, as might be imagined, for causing any buoyancy of motion. I used this skate for some years, but considered it insecure.

I do think, however, that the objection I have named

might have been obviated by some alteration in construction, so that this beautiful skate might have become thoroughly practical, but it seems almost to have disappeared.

The Glasgow Club Skate* is unquestionably superior to any other in principle. Its peculiarities are, a better form for the wooden stock or sole, which is made right and left, the exact size and shape of the boot-sole, hollowed at the tread, and at the heel, so as to fit close to the foot.

Likewise, a better form for the iron, which does not extend in the least beyond the toe, where it is simply rounded up to the edge of the sole, and has therefore none of those fine points and twisted-up ends which our grandfathers esteemed necessary elegances, but which are, in reality, just as useful as the long shoe toes, which, in days of yore, were looped up to the gallant's knee, and from which, I dare say, the long skate points were borrowed. The iron extends backwards to the extreme edge of the heel, instead of being cut off an inch within it; and the corner is rounded off, instead of ending in a sharp point, as in the old skate.

The advantages of the above form will be readily understood by any skater. The fitting of the wood enables the skate to attach more firmly, and the foot to be nearer the ice, which is an advantage. The iron being completely under the foot, is more within its control; and especially is the full length to the heel, and its rounded extremity, an advantage as the skater progresses towards proficiency, when he comes to practise the various evolutions which

* I call it so because I believe it was first adopted in Glasgow, but it is now the common form of iron in London, Canada, and all the best skating centres. The Edinburgh Club, I believe, ignores it, preferring a straight iron and sharp heel, and will continue to do so, so long and so long only, as they cling to the antiquated idea that what they call "true outside" is the only thing worth doing on skates, and confine that to the forward curve.

require to be, in whole or in part, performed backwards. Neither does the want of the sharp heel throw any difficulty in the way of stopping when you please, as has been sometimes suggested; nor is the new form less elegant on the foot than the old; on the contrary, it looks less cumbrous and more practical.*

Hitherto they have been made only with first-rate material and workmanship, but there is no reason why the shape might not be adopted in nearly the cheapest quality made; at all events a very good skate for beginners might be made at a cheap price, and yet possessing all the advantages of the improved form. Metal that will keep its edge is, however, almost a *sine qua non* for advanced skaters.

The stock or sole of the skate is made of beech or of box-wood; the former is lighter, and not so liable to split —the latter has no advantage but the questionable one of being prettier. Gutta-percha has been tried, but as yet not very successfully; perhaps, if it were mixed with sawdust from hard wood, it might do very well, as mixing has been found advantageous for other purposes; or perhaps the form of india-rubber called "vulcanite" might do. As already stated, the sole should be made to fit closely to that of the boot, the under side should not be left full, but pared away as much as is consistent with the requisite strength, so that it may not readily touch the ice in leaning over.

The iron ought not to be very much curved from toe to heel. Makers are too apt to fancy that a great curve is necessary to enable the skater to circle easily, forgetting that the turns will be made with shorter bearing on the ice, and therefore with less precision. Neither, however, ought

* This form of skate has since become almost universal, and can be procured anywhere.

the iron to be too straight, or it becomes difficult to make small circles; a reasonable medium is best.

Walker says, "the curve should be the arc of a circle whose radius is two feet." This is far too much; for, placing the centre of the iron on the ice, each end would be about an inch above it, therefore the bearing would be very short indeed. I doubt if the curve should be the arc of a circle at all; I think it should not be a uniform curve, but very slight indeed along about four inches of the middle of the iron, and increasing towards each end, so that when the middle rests on the ice, the ends will be about a quarter of an inch above it. It might be constructed on a radius of six feet and then have a few inches along the middle, ground rather flatter than that. The lower surface of the iron should be a quarter of an inch broad, under the instep, getting slightly narrower towards each end; it ought not to be grooved, as is sometimes done, much to the detriment of the beginner, who, after learning on grooved skates, will feel himself like a cat on walnut shells when he puts on plain ones. The edges should, however, be kept sharp by occasional grinding, and in doing it, the iron should be held across the face of the grindstone, which by giving an almost imperceptible concavity, ensures a sharp edge.

It is desirable to have the foot as near the ice as possible, yet necessary to have it so high that, in leaning over, the edge of the sole should not touch the ice. If the iron is, at the middle of the foot, an inch clear of the stock, it should do; but a broad foot may require an eighth or even a quarter more. An iron sole, being so much thinner than a wooden one, requires a deeper iron.

The mode of fastening may be varied to suit the fancy of the wearer, as there are many modes sufficiently good; if the skate is secured to the foot, so that it cannot shift in the

least, the end is accomplished; and if, in addition to that, the fastening aids in supporting the ancle, so much the better. Captain Jones thinks that a very firm fastening leaves the skate "no proper play," and considers that a fault; but I do not know what he seeks *play* in the skate for. I think the more it can be united with the foot the better.

For the heel fastening, a peg is the most simple. It should be as long as the boot-heel will admit, and square; but, even then, unless the straps are kept very tight, it is constantly coming out, and is therefore very objectionable.

A good screw, up into the heel, is very secure, but rather troublesome in putting on, and after some days in the same holes is apt to get loose.

A narrow bar of iron across the heel, turned up at the ends, and with screws going into each side of the boot-heel, is a very secure plan, and not troublesome, as the holes, being in the sides of the heel, do not fill up. The screws should have broad flat heads, that they may not project inconveniently. I used these for many years and found them very secure.

A bit of iron turned up at the back of the heel, with a single screw to go in, is frequently adopted; but, though more quickly adjusted, it is not quite so secure as the side screws.

A small bolt in the centre of the skate heel, made to fit into a slit in an iron plate fixed under the boot-heel, is an excellent plan. It must be so arranged, that, to insert the bolt, the skate is held at a right angle from the side of the foot, and then merely turning it to the line of the foot fixes it. The only objection is that the iron plate under the heel makes the boot very slippery to walk with.

Another plan is, to carry the heel of the skate iron up an

inch on the back of the boot-heel; a few deep notches in ratchet form are cut in it on the inner side, and a little bit of iron, with notches to correspond, is attached to the boot, sunk in at the back of the heel, so that, when together, the notches fit into one another.

The forward fastening should be a piece of leather, about four inches broad, to meet over the foot, from the point of the toe to near the instep. It may be joined either by a lace or by three buckles—the latter for choice. This, with two small spikes under the tread, and a good heel fastening, would be sufficient; but I prefer adding a strap through the middle hole of the stock, over the instep to the hole at the heel, thence up round the ancle, and forward to buckle on the instep, as it is an additional security and also supports the ancle.

The pikes under the tread, with the improved stock and improved fastenings, have not the objection of cutting the boot-soles, as they do in the ill-contrived common skate.

Of late years several very ingenious and even elegant contrivances for skate fastenings have been introduced. The one I have myself adopted is an improvement on a kind described in the first edition, being made now entirely of iron. The sole is a plate exactly fitting the boot-sole; its edges, from the tread of the foot forward round the toe, are turned first up and then inwards, so as to catch on the upper surface of the boot-sole. Round the heel the edges are turned up without being turned inwards, and there is a single flat-headed screw that fits into a socket on the back of the boot-heel. This is the whole fastening; there are no straps of any kind; the wearer trusts the rest to a well-fitting and firmly-laced ancle-boot.

I have found this skate everything that could be desired, very easy to put on and take off, perfectly secure on the

foot, and more elegant than any other I have seen ; but it is expensive, costing about 2*l.* 10*s.*, besides requiring a pair of boots to be specially set aside for skating. To obtain these skates you must have a proper pair of boots made that fit you thoroughly; the sole should project one-eighth of an inch clear of the uppers. Wear the boots for a day or two, to take the bend of the foot, and then send them to the skate maker to be fitted.

The price named means for the best steel, which, by the way, is a most particular point, and far too little attended to. Some are so soft that they constantly need grinding, and that is a most trying nuisance, particularly if you chance to be out of reach of a cutler who knows how to grind skates properly. Really well-tempered steel will not need grinding once in a season, unless longer than this climate usually favours us with; and no skater can work satisfactorily with irons constantly alternating between too great sharpness and too great bluntness.

The "Alexandra" skate, which has double irons, was introduced a few years ago as a facility for ladies learning. It is radically and thoroughly bad. If any of my readers have been induced to purchase, by plausible representations of a royal road, they had better treat the investment as a bad one, toss the Alexandras into the pond, and buy something more practical.

Among the skates that require a special boot, a variety made by Messrs. Ibbetson is a very ingenious one—I think they call it their "boot skate." It has brass tread plates. There are iron plates on the sole and heel of the boot (which may perhaps prove slippery in walking) ; that on the sole has a bolt in the middle, which opens out for use as a knife blade opens from the handle ; it fits into a hole in the tread plate, but can be got in only by holding the skate at

right angles to the foot. On turning the skate to the line of the foot the heel plates fit into each other and close with a spring.

This is certainly the quickest of all fastenings, it is very neat and seems secure; but I am not sure that the apparatus might not prove liable to derangement; at least it would need to be kept free from dirt and be occasionally oiled. The cost is 40*s*.

It seems unnecessary to repeat in this edition, the description given in the last, of a number of other varieties of patent fastening which, though some of them were very ingenious and possibly good, seem not to have succeeded in gaining public favour, while the "Acme" has become nearly universal. I formerly described and praised it when it had been just introduced. Since then it has been thoroughly tested, and I believe, if it be carefully adjusted, so as exactly to fit the boot, it is both good and safe; but unless that is done, it will not stand severe wrenches, especially with a heavy weight, and may give an awkward fall by coming off unexpectedly. It is so well known now and so generally procurable as to need no description.

To sum up: I would recommend, where enthusiasm does not outrun economy, just the wooden-soled skate of newest form, with a good heel screw and straps, the front one to be broad and separate.

Where saving of trouble is considered compensation for a little extra price, the "Acme."

Where a full purse or exuberant enthusiasm demands the best that can be had, either Ibbetson's Skate, or that described as used by myself.

It is a great error to leave the purchase of skates till the ice is bearing, then rush to a shop and have to take anything you can get. Yet that is almost the universal plan. At

any other time you would have a far better selection to pick from, and would have time to get properly fitted. The same if your irons want grinding, it would be carefully done before winter, whereas, when the frost comes the cutlers are overwhelmed with such work, and cannot do it so well.

Boot skates I have never used, but have heard them well spoken of. For ladies, I should consider them by far the best description. The skate iron is just inserted in the thick sole of a lacing ancle-boot, and there is no fastening beyond putting on the boot, and lacing it firmly. It is no new invention, for I find it advertised fully a century ago, as

> The new invented half-boot skait, sold by the inventor, Mr. James, No. 14, Newgate-street, and by Thomas Olio Rickman, No. 7, Upper Mary-le-bone-street. Price one guinea and a-half.

So it has had at least plenty of time to introduce itself. One objection is, that instead of only a pair of skates, you have to carry a pair of boots to the ice, and may have some difficulty in the disposal, while there, of the walking boots you take off.

Whatever differences there may be in taste or opinion as to the shape of the iron, or the mode of fastening, I apprehend there is none as to the best description of boot for skating in. Unquestionably the best is a pretty high ancle-boot, lacing or buckling from low on the foot, up the front. The sole should be a stout single sole—double would raise the foot too far from the ice. The upper leather should be stiff and well fitted, so as to be capable of being firmly laced, that it may give full support to the ancle, where, in skating, all the strain rests. The lacing should be in two operations, the first coming up to the bend of the ancle, and fastened there, the second from that point to

the top. Probably, instead of a lace, a series of buckles would do better, but I have not tried it; or perhaps the lower part laced and the upper part buckled would be best of all.

There is still a desideratum in skate fastenings. I question if even any of the new modes is yet perfect, while the deficiency in most of them is that their use is nearly limited to one particular pair of boots. You cannot borrow your friend's skates on an emergency, nor lend your own. Nevertheless, I would not sacrifice security of fastening to any other consideration: and the general application is of less consequence, as every one who is particular about his skating will set apart a pair of boots for the purpose.

In conclusion, I need hardly suggest that to keep the irons highly polished, and the straps and buckles clean and in good order, is not too trivial to be worth a little attention.

CHAPTER III.

INSTRUCTIONS IN SKATING.

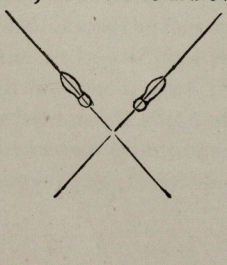
MOVEMENTS PERFORMED ON BOTH FEET.

Forward Striking—Skating Frame—Serpentine—Shinty—Backward Motion—S Figure—Treading the Circle—Canadian 8—Grape Vine—Spread Eagle—Fencing Position.

As already stated, the bottom of the iron is about a quarter of an inch broad, but in skating this is only in a few rare positions flat on the ice; it is the sharp edges of the bottom that the skater uses—sometimes the one edge, sometimes the other. The one nearest the inside of the foot is called the "inside," the other the "outside," and the evolutions which are designated "inside" or "outside" refer to which edge of the iron is used in executing them.

In the latest work on skating, the instructions for ladies learning are different from those for the other sex, but as it seems to me that whatever is easiest and best for the one sex is equally so for the other, I mean the same instructions for both. Fair readers have therefore only to substitute the feminine for the masculine pronoun as they read.

We will now suppose the aspirant fully equipped, his skates firmly fixed, and himself placed on the ice—on his feet, and left to his own resources. He must have no stick,



—if a lady, no muff (neuter or masculine),—and the arms must be left free and unfettered.

Beginners should remember that the normal position of the feet in ordinary skating is on lines nearly

at right angles to each other. This is of special importance to be attended to, as it enables the feet to aid and control each other; it will readily be observed that in that position both cannot slide away at once.

Forward Striking or Running.

Is the first movement to be learned. I will first describe what it is, and then the steps towards attaining it.

In executing it the skater keeps his toes turned out just so far that his feet line nearly at right angles to each other. From that position each foot is lifted alternately and set down, slightly on the inside edge, when it immediately slides forward, additional impetus being communicated by the other foot, which, from its position at right angles, can push against the ice without sliding.

The first step has enabled him to progress, say on the right foot, for a yard or two; he then sets down the left forward, while the right has taken its position at right angles to give the impetus. This movement repeated on each foot alternately enables the skater to attain great velocity, and is called "forward running."

We have supposed the beginner on the ice, and prepared for his first lesson. Let him, as gently as ever he pleases, and with steps so short as hardly to be steps, attempt to walk or progress forwards. The toes should be turned outwards, the ancles kept stiff, and the heels apart. Even if he can, he should not lift his feet high, and he must not try to push them out in the meantime, for he will probably find that the mere setting down will give him more impetus than he is quite prepared for.

He should lean well forward, so as in no case to fall backwards: in a forward fall the hands can assist, but a back fall is in every way awkward and objectionable.

One great error beginners make is forgetting or failing to keep the ancle stiff; the object of doing so is that the middle of the iron may be the last part to leave the ice, and the first to reach it again. If he bends the ancle and rises on the toe, as in walking, the result will probably be a fall; equally so if he sets down the heel first, which is a common fault.

The lesson should never be hurried; no attempts at royal roads, no lugging about between two skaters, as is so often done with lady learners. All these are real hindrances, teach bad habits, and give dependence in place of independence.

The first thing a beginner has to learn is to keep his feet within his control, to be able to prevent their sliding away from under him. Of course sliding is the ultimate end to be attained, but that afterwards comes naturally, and what is wanted at first is to be able to control the sliding tendency of the irons. Therefore the common practice of learners commencing with a little push on one foot and a little slide on both, then another little push (generally from the same foot) and another little slide, and so on, is just about the worst practice they can adopt. They should first learn to move about without letting the irons slide at all.

Of course it *can* be acquired the other way, and the bad habits *can* afterwards be got rid of with care; but it is far better to avoid ever having them.

If a fall is imminent, the best way is just to subside as gently as may be compatible with the emergency; making frantic efforts to save usually has no better effect than making a light fall severe, and in the case of ladies is otherwise inconvenient.

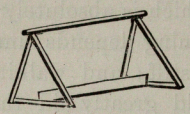
But by the mode of learning I have described, falls may almost be escaped. I have known more than one young

lady in a couple of hours learn to stand with perfect confidence, and even move about by herself, slowly indeed, but without much risk of falling; and in a very few days' trial, move quite freely and safely, and step with that regular alternation of foot which is absolutely necessary to graceful skating. Quick learning depends almost entirely on ability to keep the ancles stiff; and walking with skates on a carpet or lawn would greatly aid that. Indeed, I would strongly advise learners to practise walking about on their skates at home, till they learn to keep the ancles straight.

What with bruises and tired ancles, possibly a little ridicule at his falls, or an occasional practical joke from some more expert companion, the first day or two goes off rather unpleasantly; but that the exultation at gaining a new power more than counterbalances all misfortunes, is best proved by the fact that no one is deterred by them, at least I never heard of any; on the contrary, the moment the day's miseries are over, they leave behind them an increased appetite for more, and this appetite continues to grow with the learner's progress.

In a very few days the learner, if he has carefully attended to the above directions, will find himself able to move about with a little more security, and he will find himself striking out a little. In doing so, let him be particularly careful to use both feet equally, and not acquire the bad habit of doing everything with the right foot, to the neglect of the left. He should carefully time the lifting of his feet, to be sure that he is doing it equally, as perfect regularity in stepping from foot to foot is essential. Continued practice will soon make him perfect in forward striking, and bring him on step by step, not merely to freedom and grace in his movements, but to the attainment of those more difficult evolutions to be afterwards described.

While I deprecate most of the adventitious aids by which learners vainly attempt to hasten their progress, I am of opinion that a properly contrived frame, with a bar breast-high for the hands to grasp, would be of great advantage in



getting learners into a correct attitude and regularity in striking. There should be a bar also close to the ice to prevent the learner's skates from going too far forward, as that would cause an awkward fall. And the frame should not be too easily moved, or it would fail to teach the necessity of keeping the feet at right angles, as the only position from which to gain pushing power. It should therefore not be on runners. With these suggestions, I think any country carpenter could knock up a contrivance to suit; and it would undoubtedly facilitate ladies learning forward striking; beyond that it would be of no use.

The Serpentine—Forwards without Striking.

The feet, instead of at right angles, are placed parallel. Without lifting either, turn both at once in the same direction, say to the right, swinging the body with them. Then both to the left, with a swing to that side and so on. The skater progresses in a wavy line, apparently without effort, and the velocity acquired is considerable.

The easiest way to learn is, after taking a few strokes forward to gain force, bring the feet parallel but well apart, and with the knees bent; and, while going along in that way, attempt to make the line wavy by swinging the body, and turning both feet first to the right, and then to the left; aiding the motion, by pushing against the ice with the

left when going to the right, and *vice versâ*. At first it is difficult to keep up the speed you commence with, but after a little practice the impetus can not only be kept up, but originated, without requiring any striking for the commencement. In this lesson the feet are always parallel instead of being always at right angles, as in the former lesson.

This movement is not perhaps elegant, but it is a great relaxation from the fatigue of striking, and without much diminution in speed. Moreover, if you come to a weak bit of ice, it is by far the safest way of crossing it, as the motion is more gentle, and the weight is divided equally between the two feet, which in such a case should be kept considerably apart.

The learner at this stage should have done some practice also in turning, so as to acquire steadiness and facility in doing it, not only to right and left, but quite round. The process will suggest itself, and needs no description.

Shinty (*Anglicè*, Hockey).

Although this variation in skating is considered altogether *infra dig.* by our most accomplished performers (and very properly so where the space is somewhat limited, as it is rather annoying to be knocked off one's equilibrium in the middle of some difficult figure, or finely-balanced poise, and dashed to the ice by the stampedo rush of a party of frantic players), yet I cannot forbear from a few words in its favour.

Where there is room, I consider following the shinty ball on skates an exhilarating and invigorating pastime; and, what is still more to the purpose, I know no other sort of practice that will give a learner so much confidence and security on his skates.

Of course he must be able to run about pretty freely before he can attempt shinty, but when he can, the keen spirit of the game urging him after the ball, with rapid runs, sudden stops, and quick turns, quite heedless of falls and impediments, will give him a control over his skates that twice as much less exciting practice would not. Sharp-heeled skates are of great advantage in this sort of skating. The one necessity, however, is space, and on a club pond it is always quite inadmissible; indeed, on a properly regulated club pond no one is allowed to carry a stick at all, and that rule should be absolute.

Backward Motion.

The common backward motion on both feet is exactly the same as the "Serpentine," except being backwards instead of forwards. To learn it, take a few strokes forward, then turn quite round, and while the impetus lasts, turn the right toe inward, and push yourself back from that foot, then turn the left one inward, pushing from it, and so on alternately, and leaning forward all the time. You will soon find it quite easy not merely to keep up the first impetus, but to increase it, and to begin it without any forward strokes.

Great speed can be acquired, but there is nothing graceful in this movement; it however lessens the awkwardness of feeling yourself moving backwards, and it is necessary to learn it, because it facilitates some of the more difficult evolutions, and gives the freedom and confidence of varied practice.

The S Figure.

Follows as an easy result from the last described, and this is as neat and graceful as its prototype is otherwise. As soon as you are perfect in the common backward motion, try at each stroke to bring the feet into line, one behind the

other, toe to heel. As soon as you take a stroke from the right foot, bring the right heel to the left toe and go backwards in that position, the left iron being on the inside edge, the right iron on the outside. Then, in taking a stroke from the left foot, bring the left heel to the right toe and go backward, this time the left iron being on the outside edge and the right iron on the inside.

At first you will find it very difficult to bring either iron on to the outside edge, if you have not learnt outside before attempting this, but even in that case perseverance will overcome it, and this practice will be found a great assistance towards subsequently learning outside. The perfection of this figure is, to have the feet in accurate position without interval, and to go backwards in alternate full sweeping semi-circles of considerable size. To arrive at that, you must rest most on the foot that is outside edge, and if you are already an adept at outside, you will find this figure extremely easy. The head is turned over right or left shoulder, according as right or left foot is put behind.

Treading the Circle.

Is also a backward movement, with both feet employed, and in the same relative positions as in the last named, that is, toe to heel. It is like taking one of the circles of the S and perpetuating it.

Lean well forward; bring the feet into line, say the right heel to the left toe. Slightly lift the right foot, and set it down again in exactly the same place, and on the outside edge; then, slightly lift the left foot, setting it down again in the same place, and on the inside edge; repeat with the right, and so on alternately, but never changing the relative positions of the feet nor the edges of the irons. The motion obtained from that slight lifting and a slight push in setting

down takes you back in a circle, which you continue in the same direction, gradually increasing the speed and the size of the circle, till astonishing velocity is attained.

When the circle is small and the speed slow, the lifting of the feet and the push should be imperceptible; the source of the impetus is then unseen and the movement is very easy and graceful. But, to increase the size of circle and attain speed, the lifting must be more marked.

This figure is more frequently done with the *front* foot on the *inside* edge instead of on the *outside*. That is a great deal easier, and equal speed is attainable, but it looks sprawling and ungraceful, and is just as inferior to the above as most inside figures are inferior to outside ones.

The Canadian 8 (Diagram IV.)

Is another backward figure in which the feet are in line as the last, and in which they never change their relative positions, though the edges of the irons are changed.

Take a backward stroke, bringing the right heel in front of the left toe; in that position circle backwards a small circle leaning to the right; as soon as the circle is complete, lean over to the left, keeping the feet in the same relative positions; that turn changes the edges of both irons, and in the act of doing it, you have to acquire impetus to carry you back in a small circle the converse way. When that is completed you are back at the point where you changed before, and therefore the figure 8 is complete. You must, however, repeat the 8 *ad libitum* in the same tracks, and making the changes so smoothly that the source of impetus is entirely concealed. This figure, when well done, has a very pretty effect, and I have found it difficult to acquire. If you prefer not to complete the 8 you may go all over the pond in a wavy

line much resembling the S figure, except that the feet do not change their relative positions.

The Canadian Grape Vine (Diagram IV.)

This is another figure executed mostly with the feet in line, toe to heel, but the relative positions of the feet, and the edges of the irons, and the direction from backward to forward are changed so often and so rapidly, that I almost despair of describing it intelligibly. I saw it beautifully performed a few winters ago, and it looks like a curious interlacing and juggling of the feet, the source of impetus being entirely concealed. I asked the performer to spell it for me in syllables, but he could not, as he said it could not be done slowly. There are several forms of it, some very complicated; the simplest I will try to describe. Start with the right foot on the outside edge in front of left on the inside edge, make a small semi-circle forward in that position, then throw back the right shoulder, changing your direction to backward with the right toe to the left heel, the right foot being now inside edge, and the left outside. After a back half-circle in that way, again bring forward the right shoulder, changing direction again to forwards, with the right foot outside edge in front of the left inside edge. Though the changes of the feet are somewhat complicated, the body simply repeats a half-turn back and front again, never going completely round, and the face actually remaining steadily in the same direction all the time.

For instance, if you are going along the pond from north to south, the face at starting is turned nearly west, looking past the *right* shoulder. At the first change, throwing back the right shoulder, takes the body round by east, but the face remains at west looking past the *left* shoulder;

bringing forward the right shoulder again restores the starting position.

In the more complicated forms of this figure the turns are complete instead of only half, but I can neither do them nor describe them.*

The subjoined letter appeared in the *Field* some time ago, and I insert it because, while apparently not exactly the same form of the figure as the above (which I got from an accomplished Canadian skater), still it seems to me a more successful attempt to describe what is almost more difficult to describe than to do, a figure in which the intricate involutions of the feet are so frequent and so rapid. Undoubtedly my old diagram was wrong in omitting to show cusps for the heel turns :

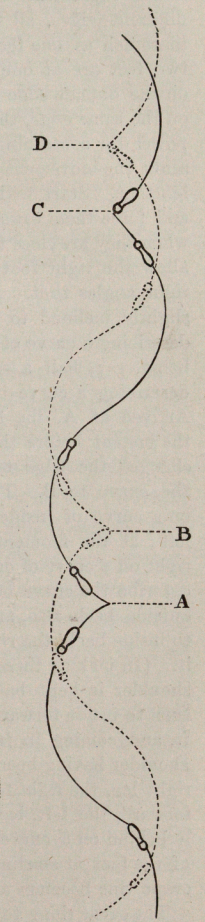
The "lockstitch" alluded to in the letter has also appeared in the *Field,* with description and diagram. It appears to be an inelegant variation of the "common outside roll forward," produced by keeping what in that figure is called the "unemployed" foot also on the ice, in rear of the other, and toe to heel, with the rear knee pressed into the hollow of the front knee. It seems destitute of merit on paper, and I hardly think it would improve on the ice, but I have never seen it.

A correspondent asks the following question, "What is the grape vine? 'Cyclos' is not clear. Also, what may lockstitch consist of?"

On turning to the description and diagram of the "Canadian grape vine" in "The Art of Skating" by "Cyclos," I can quite understand the difficulty your correspondent may have had in trying to make out anything from "Cyclos's" description and diagram, as it is quite evident that the diagram given in the "Art of Skating" does not repre-

* Since that was written the grape-vine has been developed into a number of variations, the "Philadelphia," the "Spread Eagle," the "Pennsylvania," and others. These hardly can be put clearly on paper.

sent the "grape vine" at all, as all the cusps point in the same direction. I do not think that "Cyclos" was acquainted with the movement at the time he wrote his description, and I am confirmed in my idea by an observation which he made in the *Field* of Jan. 11, 1868, with reference to a *true* diagram of a "grape vine" which I had inserted, without any written description, in the *Field* of Dec. 21, 1867, and of which he says, "I, knowing the figure, could not make it out."



All two-footed movements are most difficult to describe, and principally for this reason—that, although the diagram may give a correct representation of the figure as made on the ice, yet it gives no idea of the relative positions of the feet while the movement is being executed. There is no particular difficulty in skating the *ingredients* of which the grape vine is composed, but very great difficulty is experienced in explaining how the ingredients are used; and when I remembered that I have, with all the advantage that ice gives one to demonstrate a figure, on more than one occasion striven without success for several consecutive days to teach the movement to accomplished skaters, I almost despair of writing such a description as will be intelligible to my readers.

I learned the grape vine by simply taking a diagram that had been sent to me from Canada (unaccompanied by any description)—and which I inserted in the *Field* of Dec. 21, 1867—and forcing my feet to follow the turns and curves. By this means I acquired the action, and subsequent practice made it *go*. It was once remarked to me that the grape vine was a very "slippery-looking figure." Most men in England, although they do the proper turns, &c., do not manage to skate it so that it looks "slippery," and this because the figure is skated by them in jerks. There ought to be no stop whatever—all ought to go as smoothly as possible; and when done in this way, the "jugglery" of the feet and the apparent absence

of motive power, are, to a person unacquainted with the movement, most perplexing.

The ingredients of the grape vine consist of turns and curves on different edges, all curves being curves of relative equilibrium; but, inasmuch as one foot has the start of the other by several inches, the two feet are at one or two points of the figure both describing curves on the outside edge in opposite directions; and this opposing of curves on the same edge, though on different feet, principally gives the motive power for continuing the figure. The thin line of the diagram represents the movement of the right, the dotted line the movement of the left foot. Start with the feet some way apart, both on the inside edge, and force them towards each other on that edge in a forward direction; when they are close together, turn in the toes as much as possible, and allow the right foot to pass before the front of the left, and almost at right angles to it. As soon as the feet have crossed, the body must be slightly inclined to the right, right shoulder forward, the right leg describing a curve of outside forwards; in the meantime the left leg—being, say, half a second behind the right in point of time—is also describing a curve of outside forwards, but in an opposite direction. Arrived at A, the body is turned as in making the simple 3, and the instant before the right leg forms the cusps at A, the left, having changed the edge to inside forward, passes in rear of it and continues the curve to B. The right leg having formed the cusp now passes on a curve of inside back, in rear of and almost at right angles to the left; at the moment this is done the left forms a cusp and follows the right on a curve of outside back; but by the time the left has begun to describe the curve of outside back the right has changed the edge to outside back also, and directly afterwards, the left making the change to inside back, the right passes in rear of and almost at right angles to it. (In making these changes of edge in a backward direction the left shoulder is kept back.) The right, arrived at C, forms a cusp by a turn to inside forward, the left, on the curve of inside back just clearing it, and coming in front of and almost at right angles to it; the right shoulder having been brought forward when the cusp was formed by the right leg, the right foot passes in front of the left on a curve of inside forward, the left, having formed the cusp at D, following and crossing it behind on a curve of outside forward; and, as this was the position of the feet at starting, by repeating the movement above described the grape vine becomes an "accomplished fact."

The great thing to be remembered in trying the grape vine is, that in the formation of the cusps from a back to a forward movement *the toes*

cannot be too much turned in, and in the movement from the forward to the back they cannot be too much turned out.

To accomplish the "double grape vine" it becomes necessary for the skater to learn the single, starting with the left foot in front of the right, doing the same movements as are described above with the face in an opposite direction; the curves will of course be all counter-marched. Starting as in the single grape vine above described, viz., with the right foot in front of the left, two cusps instead of one are made on either foot, and these two turns bring the body entirely round; so that, facing in an opposite direction to which the figure was begun, it now becomes necessary to pass the left foot in front of the right, and so continue the figure.

I must leave the description of the "lock stitch" to some of our Canadian skaters. T. MAXWELL WITHAM.

THE SPREAD EAGLE.

I describe this figure without recommending it. It is ungraceful in the extreme, and leads to nothing else. It is executed by placing the feet in the dancing master's "first position," heel to heel, in as near a straight line as possible, the knees being bent, and the arms held nearly straight up. The impetus having first been obtained by a few forward strokes, the feet are brought quickly into the position, and the head turned in the direction in which you are going, when the natural consequence is a circle sideways, made on the inside edge of both irons, and larger or smaller according as the feet are more or less in line, the body more or less upright, and the head more or less turned.

If the feet can be turned a little more, the knees still bent, the body inclined backwards, and the head turned over the shoulder in the direction you are going, the circle becomes one on the outside edge, which has an extraordinary appearance from its extreme difficulty, and on that account may be worth getting up; but not, even then, does it approach elegance.

Mr. Cartwright's mode of learning the outside Eagle

seems the best, and may be of use to any one who wishes to attain it :—

To make it, skate forward, and let the right foot cross the left at every second stroke, as if you were practising the outside according to the directions given for that. When by this means you have attained a tolerable speed, make a bold stroke on the outside edge of the left skate, the right one being free; turn out the toe of the right while still in the air, preserving the inclination, and then put it down. If you are skating in a large circle such as we have on the Serpentine, your face will be to the spectators, and your back to the centre. The centrifugal force of course supports you—it is, indeed, the key to the figure; for you can only commence it on the outside by having previously been skating in a circle by crossing the foot.

The Fencing Position.

This is one of Captain Jones's figures, a century old, and, though only a modification of the last mentioned, is in every way superior to it. The feet are in the same position, but you rest most on the one in front; instead of going on either edge of the iron you must keep on the flat, so that you move in a perfectly straight line, without curving either way, and in this lies the difficulty. The attitude, from which the name is taken, is thus described :—

The right arm (when going to the right) must be held out nearly in a line with the shoulder, and the eyes fixed on the fingers of that hand. The body must be held as upright as possible, the breast held out, and the head back; all these positions must be well observed, otherwise it will be impossible to move in a right line, or to keep your balance.

Another variation of the "Spread Eagle" was also given by Captain Jones. It combines the inside circle and the outside, by executing, in the position of the spread eagle, a curve on each edge alternately, which must be extremely difficult, and will, if well performed, prove a showy figure.

Striking Forward and going Back.

For those to whom curious feats and tricks have more attraction than mere grace, I may mention a somewhat peculiar movement in which, while the stroke or motive power appears to be taken in a forward direction, the progression is really retrograde.

It is done entirely on outside edge, and in the following manner. You look and you lean forward; then lift one foot, say the right, cross it quite over the left, in front, and set it down on the outside edge. Then lift the left, cross it over in front of the right, and set it down on the outside edge, and so on alternately. In each setting down you give the foot a concealed impetus backwards, and that, along with the forward leaning of the body, is quite enough to send you back pretty quickly, but it would be difficult to instil any grace into the movement.

CHAPTER IV.

FIGURE SKATING.

SINGLE FOOT FORWARD MOVEMENTS.

Inside Edge Forward—Outside Edge Forward—Rolling—Crossing Roll —Travelling—Figure 8—Spiral Line—Compass Circle—Sea Serpent.

THE term "figure skating" is more frequently applied to those figures which are done on one foot, and which may therefore be supposed to be the most difficult. But this is not altogether correct, for many of the figures on both feet are more difficult than some that are done on one. It was not possible to describe them strictly in the order of their facility, as one man finds a figure easy which may entirely puzzle another man, who again may find another easy which is difficult to the first; I have therefore put the two feet figures in one chapter, and I now come to the single foot ones.

The turns on the inside edge are comparatively easy, because the skater requires to lean only towards that side where he has the other foot ready to support him in case of need.

Those on the outside edge are, on the other hand, very difficult to attain, because the learner must lean to that side where he is deprived of the aid of the other foot. It would be quite impossible to stand in these positions, but he can circle or curve, because the centrifugal force keeps him from falling.

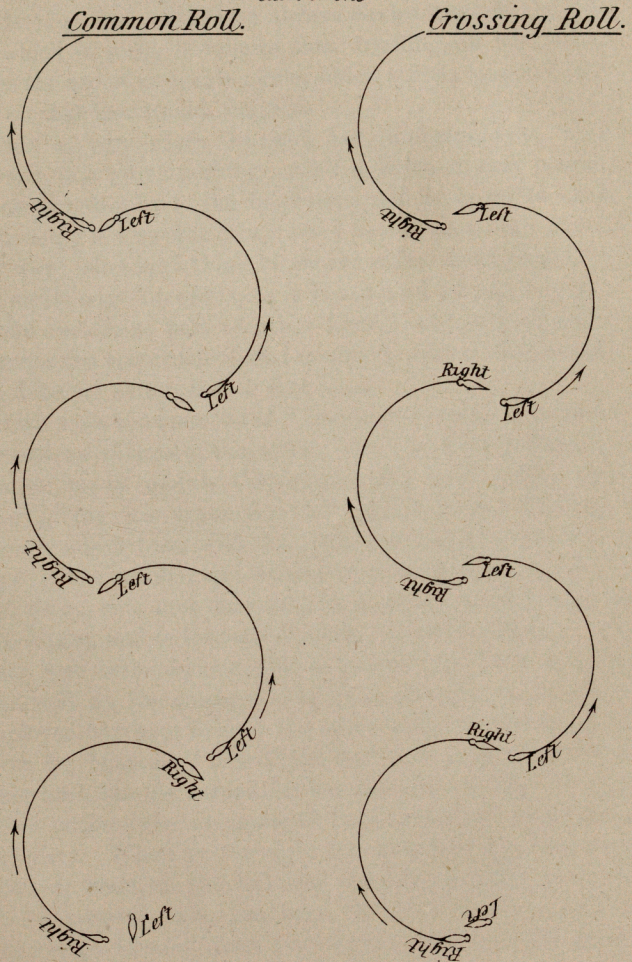
INSIDE EDGE FORWARD.

When the young skater can run freely, and feels himself pretty well at home on his skates, he will naturally dwell

DIAGRAM I.

Outside Forward.

Showing the position of the foot at the beginning and end of each stroke



In either mode completing the Circles makes figure 8.

longer on each stroke than at first; and as, in describing "Forward Striking," I mentioned that it is done on the inside edge, and as the iron always circles towards the side on which it rests, it follows that dwelling on the stroke gives the arc of an inside circle, which a little longer dwelling on that foot would complete.

This is very easily learned, but, unfortunately, when learned, it is worth nothing; and I mention it, only because it comes naturally to the beginner; and he is apt to think he is doing a very fine thing when he can go on one foot in any way; whereas I think he should rather avoid practising the inside edge forwards, as it is not used by good skaters, except rarely, as part of other figures, and, I fear, rather impedes the acquirement of the outside edge. Backwards, is a different thing, but of that anon.

Such were the opinions of "Inside Forwards" expressed in previous editions of this work. Mr. Vandervell, however, accuses me of unduly disparaging the inside edge, and, after giving his arguments full consideration, I unhesitatingly admit that, with the great increase that has taken place in the number and variety of skating figures since I first wrote, it is now necessary for a skater to be perfect in both edges, and in forward "inside" as well as back. To make it as little objectionable as possible the body must be kept well up, the employed leg quite straight, and the unemployed one kept behind the other, either in the position given for "outside," or with the heel close in the rear of the other heel, the toe-turned far out and close to the ice. In either position the unemployed knee turned out away from the other. When on the right foot the right shoulder well forward, when on the left foot the left shoulder forward. Mr. Vandervell, who has been the first to advocate the inside edge forward, dwells strongly on the position being

what he calls "sideways," which, of course, is only to be attained by throwing forward the one shoulder and throwing back the other, and is proper both for "outside" and "inside," whether backward or forward.

Outside Forward.

This is unquestionably the key to all superior performance, and no one can have any pretensions to be considered a moderately good skater who is deficient in it.

All the most difficult figures are variations of the outside circle or curve; and it is therefore of the utmost importance to the learner's subsequent proficiency, to be well grounded in the first steps.

There is, I fully believe, only one way of learning it well, and if the learner is uninstructed in that, he may labour for years, and, after all, not acquire the correct balance.

Let the skater, by means of common skating, attempt to move round in a circle; at first it may be of any size he pleases, and be gradually reduced as he improves. As he lifts each foot for the next stroke he is to try to cross it in front quite over the other, and set it down, then the other in front of that, and so on alternately; always dwelling as long as he can on whichever foot is nearest the inside of the circle, because that foot is working on the outside edge of the iron—and as briefly as possible on the other, which works on the inside edge. The foot that is behind must be kept behind until it is to be set down, then be brought forward, and the instant it is in front, down with it; *it must not be carried in the air in front for an instant.*

When tired of skating with the right foot to the inside of the circle, go off in the other direction, that is, making a circle with the left foot to the inside of it, when you will dwell most on the left; be particular to give both ways

equal practice, or rather, in this and in all other figures, unless you have a special facility for left foot skating, give the left double practice, as the only way to acquire for both a perfect equality of skill.

When first the learner tries skating round in a circle, he will find it rather difficult, and particularly so to put down the foot quite across the other, but with a little practice he will get round with comparative ease; and, after a few days at this, varied, of course, with other practice, he will be surprised at his own progress; he will find himself able to dwell for a few yards on the outside edge, with the raised foot behind him—perhaps nearly to complete the circle.

There is no other mode of learning that will give equal confidence in leaning over to the outside, or enable the learner to acquire the correct balance, and yet keep the raised foot well back; for there is no other practice that gives the centrifugal force which alone makes leaning over possible without falling. Even after the skater can complete the circle on the outside edge with tolerable ease, he will find benefit from frequently reverting to this practice; particularly at the beginning of every season, when he may feel a little insecure.

Rolling—The Common Roll (Diagram I.)

This is the first mode of turning to account the last lesson. It consists of an outside semi-circle on each foot alternately; and has been termed "Rolling," on account of the marked inclination of the body, first to one side, then to the other, as the skater circles to the right or to the left. To the ignorant spectator it looks wonderful, as the body is manifestly in a position which it would appear impossible to maintain for a moment without falling.

It is maintained, as I have already mentioned, by centrifugal force; and the inclination can therefore be much increased by increased speed: exactly as circus horses walk round the circus upright—canter at a slight inclination inwards—but when put to the gallop, lie over in a position in which they could not stand for an instant.

Except in executing some of the figures, it is not necessary to complete the circle in Rolling. The skater changes the foot when he has a mind; nevertheless, I would recommend the learner not to attempt to alternate the feet, until he can do a complete circle on either separately. If he begins trying to alternate as soon as he can go a yard or two on the outside edge, he will inevitably check his acquirement of the proper inclination, as he has to change to the opposite inclination before he has ever got fairly over.

When he has attained the single circle on either foot properly, changing from one to the other at pleasure is easily acquired. To make the change, he must bring forward the raised foot, and, without crossing it, set it down in front on the outside edge, at the same time changing the inclination of the body. In making this change, the foot that has just finished its curve comes over momentarily on to the inside edge, and by pushing from that, he takes the impetus for his new circle.

The raised foot should not be brought forward till it has to be set down; for nothing is more awkward and ungainly looking than to see a skater rolling with the raised foot perhaps up high in front of him, or sticking up stiffly to one side like a pump handle. But, as doing so acts as a counterbalance to the lean over, it is easier than the right way, and the learner is very apt to fall into a bad habit, which a careful beginner would avoid.

Captain Jones's plan of teaching is rather different from

what I have described, and I shall therefore extract it for the reader's consideration. He says:

To preserve the balance on the outside edge is so difficult to be acquired, that I have known many to spend three or four winters in learning it. To prevent such disappointment, I will lay down one general rule, which I have never known to fail, even with those who at first seem the most awkward. Suppose a stroke to be made on the left foot, it must be put down on the flat, with the knee bent, the head inclined to the left, the right arm held out, nearly upon a line with the shoulder, and the left arm held close to the side; then, with the right foot, impel yourself to the left, by often pressing the inside edge of the skate on the ice; the left foot is not to be taken off. By this method you will make a sweep, which you must endeavour to increase, by inclining the body to the left, and bearing on the outside edge of the skate, and by gradually increasing your inclination, and turning the head more and more to the left shoulder, you will form a spiral line. This method must be reversed for the right foot; and if practised for two or three days, the outside edge may be acquired.

I confidently assert, that if the young skater tries the Captain's lesson, he will learn very slowly; and after he gets to skate on the outside edge of the iron, he will be seen to hold his body more perpendicular than the limb on which it rests, being evidently afraid to lean over to his circle. Depend upon it, nothing but going round and round quickly in one circle will teach him to lean over, for nothing else will give the centrifugal force which alone enables it to be done. The captain was evidently not aware of this, for he devotes a very pedantic chapter to the inquiry why it is possible "to maintain the body in a falling position."

Which must appear to those who neither consider nor understand the reason, as it were somewhat amazing; but if mechanically considered, it may be easily conceived with this allowance, that nature here, as well as on many occasions, acts in a manner that cannot be entirely reduced to mechanical principles.

"This allowance" is certainly a very neat way of jumping the difficulty, and flooring those "who neither consider nor

understand." It is a fair specimen of natural philosophy in the dark ages. He then goes into an elaborate argument to prove that a wooden representative of humanity could not possibly maintain an inclination so far off the centre of gravity, and concludes :

I can assign no other reason for his being capable of supporting himself in such an attitude than the wonderful construction and manner of acting of the muscles.

For learning Outside edge, the next authority, likewise a military one, Captain Clias, says :

Much assistance may be derived from placing a bag of lead shot in the pocket next to the foot employed, which will produce an artificial poise of the body, which afterwards will become natural by practice.

With all deference, I should fancy that, if an artificial counterpoise is to be used, the hand farthest from the foot employed would be the best place for giving it power. But I beg the learner to use nothing of the sort.

Mr. Vandervell gives as "the most natural, easy, and proper method," to skate round in an enormous circle, and, after getting impetus, let both feet run in parallel curves for some yards without striking, when, as one iron will necessarily be on the outside edge and the other on the inside, the skater has only to ease off from the latter and get his whole weight on to the former, "and the problem is solved." I doubt if the learner will find that either so easy or so efficacious as my method, which Mr. Vandervell gives in his Ladies' Chapter as an "excellent" method for them. It seems to me that if "excellent" for the one sex it must be equally so for the other.

The reader will, I hope, excuse my dwelling so long upon "Outside edge," for the reason that it may well be considered the key to everything else ; and I wished to give him other opinions as well as my own.

The Crossing Roll (Diagram I.)

For many years the Crossing Roll had been pretty generally ignored as inelegant, but it is again coming into favour, and is certainly the fashionable movement of the day. Whatever difference of opinion may exist as to which of the two styles is the most elegant, there can be none as to the much greater difficulty of the crossing roll. Therefore, say its advocates, proficiency in it indicates a higher stage of skating accomplishment. I am not disposed to dispute the point; for, while I am satisfied that the difficulties are real, I am not quite satisfied that the inelegance is inherent and inevitable, and am rather disposed to defer to the opinion so strongly expressed by Mr. Cartwright and other writers in the *Field*, that perfection in the "crossing roll" is a "great accomplishment." I, therefore, recommend diligent practice in it, so as to subdue the tendency of the limbs to assume awkward positions, which seems to pertain more to this than to the common roll.

In executing, the whole difference between the two is in the setting down of the foot for the new stroke. In the common mode, as will be remembered, the foot is brought forward and set down to the *inside* of the other, and the impetus is gained by a push from the other foot, which has come momentarily over on to the *inside* edge of the iron. In the crossing mode the foot is brought forward—crossed over in front, and set down on the *outside* of the other, with the feet on nearly parallel lines, and the impetus is gained partly by a push from the other (which remains to the last on the *outside* edge of the iron), and partly by swing.

In either mode the most perfect roll is in very full semicircles; for instance, if you are going along the pond, from south to north, the right foot should be set down pointing

west, and the next stroke should not be taken till you have got round to face east, when you set down the left foot pointing east; and so on.

The Canadians have added a turn to the roll; their circles are done very small, and instead of changing the foot after a semi-circle, they spin round on the same foot in a very small loop, and change the foot when round to the same direction as they were in at the end of the semi-circle, thus making a turn and a half between each change of foot. When well done the effect is very good, and its attainment requires much practice. To get round the loop it seems necessary to bring the raised foot to the front, which is rather awkward and the only objection to the figure.

I have still one important point to discuss, namely, the attitude. I recommend a quiet one, without exaggeration or attempt at display. The old style, with the foot held high behind, and the arms high in front, looks rather pompous and theatrical nowadays, but that is less objectionable than the extreme carelessness or awkwardness that characterises some otherwise good skaters. The skate, perhaps, circles beautifully, but the knee above it is awkwardly bent, while the foot in the air is held as if playing football, and just about to make a tremendous kick. The body is twisted away from the circle, the head is obscured somewhere among the shoulders, the eyes are watching the progress of the feet, and as for the arms, they assume the most awkward positions attainable on the spur of the moment! No single skater perhaps aggregates all these awkwardnesses in his own person, but if he has any one of them, let him eschew it carefully.

If you are rolling on the right foot, the right knee, which is necessarily bent at the commencement of the stroke, should be quickly straightened up, the right shoulder for-

ward, the head erect, and the eyes turned in the direction in which you are circling—the right arm may or may not be a little raised, but never so high as the shoulder—the left arm down, the left knee a little bent, and *turned away from the other*, the toe pointing to the ice, close to it and barely a foot behind the right heel. When skating on the left foot, all these positions are interchanged.

So much at least for my opinion; but, that the reader may have a little more choice, I will tell him what other writers say on the subject of attitude.

Captain Jones, for "travelling" on the outside edge, recommends "the hands in the side pockets as most easy." "Travelling," I may mention, is just "rolling" in a milder form; instead of circling, the curve is reduced to something not far off a straight line, but still on the outside edge. This is the movement used in northern countries for going journeys; reducing the curve of course saves distance and time.

For "genteel rolling," he says:

Let the arms be easily crossed over the breast; some chuse to let them hang down at their sides, and others put them behind their backs, both these methods are straining, and not graceful.

Captain Clias says:

On the commencement of the outside stroke, the knee of the employed limb should be a little bended, and gradually brought to a rectilinear position when the stroke is completed. On taking the stroke, the body ought to be thrown forward easily, the unemployed limb kept in a direct line with the body, and the face and eyes looking directly forward; the unemployed foot ought to be stretched towards the ice, with the toes in a direct line with the leg. While making the curve, the body must be gradually and imperceptibly raised, and the unemployed limb brought in the same manner forward; so that, at finishing the curve, the body will bend a small degree backward, and the unemployed foot will be about two inches before the other, ready to embrace the ice, and form a correspondent curve. The muscular movement of the whole body

must correspond with the movement of the skate, and should be regulated so as to be almost imperceptible. Particular attention should be paid in carrying round the head and eyes with a regular and imperceptible motion; for nothing so much diminishes the grace and elegance of skating as sudden jerks and exertions too frequently used by the generality of skaters.

The above is excellent; the only alterations I would suggest are, to straighten the employed leg as soon as you can, to keep the unemployed one less stiff by slightly bending the knee and turning it quite outwards, and to delay bringing the foot forward till ready to change.

For the arms, the same authority says:—

There is no mode of disposing of them more gracefully in skating outside than folding the hands into each other, or using a muff.

This I certainly cannot recommend.

The attitude I have given for rolling may be considered a sort of normal one for all figure skating forwards; and for backwards also, if you follow the instruction to turn the head and eyes in the direction in which you are circling, you will still be right.

In some of the more delicate poises, such as the "fencing position," "flying Mercury," large "spiral," "shamrock," and a few others, it may be necessary, for the balance, to extend the unemployed limb and raise the arm somewhat more than I have described above, but the less the better.

Figure 8.

This is rolling so as quite to complete the circle with each foot alternately; the starting point is the centre of the 8, and finishing one circle brings you back to that point to start for the second circle. This is a most beautiful figure, and excellent practice; to make it available for skating in concert, you must learn to execute the pair of circles,

repeating them always in the same tracks. Throw your glove on the ice, or make some mark for your starting point, at which your circles must also finish. You must also learn to make the circles large or small at pleasure, and to control your movements so as to keep time with your partners. Either the common or the crossing roll may be used for this figure; for very small circles the crossing is best. The Canadians have made very small circles fashionable, but I consider them less graceful because they require the unemployed foot brought too soon to the front.

The Spiral Line.

Take as many forward strokes as will bring you to your top speed, then start on one foot for a large outside circle, but instead of completing it at the starting point, reduce the circle as you proceed, continuing as long as the impetus lasts, which may easily be for three or four complete turns, the circles becoming gradually smaller.

The attitude for this is the same as for rolling, except that, the balance being more difficult, the unemployed limb must be a little more raised, and the arms a little more extended, trying, however, to avoid exaggeration. The moment you start on the circle, straighten the employed limb, take the balance, and keep it to the end without the slightest motion of head, hand, or foot, other than the smooth gliding round. Any other movement indicates difficulty in keeping the poise, and spoils what is otherwise a beautiful figure.

The Compass Circle

Is one of the Canadian figures, and only those who have practised very small circles can attain it.

Suppose you are skating for an outside circle on the right, the unemployed foot is to be held behind and crossed to

your right as far as you can stretch it, and the toe is placed on the ice and forms the centre round which you have to revolve. Your left leg is thus the radius of the circle, and as that gives a small circle only, of course the lean over has to be very great to accomplish it. Three or four revolutions can be made in that position by a good skater with highly-curved skate-irons; the effect is certainly peculiar, and it looks difficult, but not graceful.

The Pirouette

Is also Canadian, and is one of those novelties which a skater of the London Club would probably term a trick rather than a skating figure; still it can be accomplished only through having most complete command of the skate and perfect poise. It consists in rising on the extreme tip of one toe, and, through a swing of the other leg, spinning round like a top for several gyrations.

The Sea Serpent.

This is rather a whimsical movement, and, I dare say, will not prove a favourite; but its difficulty may prove an attraction, and it gives great command of the edges.

With three or four forward strokes to gain power, start on one foot outside, and, after making a semi-circle, change the skate to the inside edge, at the same moment bringing forward the raised leg in front, and sweeping it back again without setting down; when you have done a semi-circle on the inside, change back to the outside, giving the same sweep of the leg, and so on alternately. You can, in this way, progress without ever putting the raised foot on the ice; at first, you will only be able to continue while the first impetus lasts, but by practice you will increase your number of curves, till you can dispense with the preliminary striking

altogether, and make the movement self-sustaining. The change from one edge to the other, and the impetus, must be derived from the sweep of the raised leg, and a corresponding swing of the body, not from any twisting of the ancle. The semi-circles should be as full and equal as possible.

This figure, under a different name, was a favourite in the last century, but now it is rarely practised; it would, however, prove a great aid to learning the Q figures.

CHAPTER V.

SINGLE FOOT BACKWARDS AND MIXED FIGURES.

Inside edge Backwards—Outside edge Backwards—Flying Mercury—Straight Line—Cork Leg—Figure 3—Outside 3—Reverse 3—Shamrock—United 3s—Q Figures—Double 3—Double Reverse 3—"Field" Figures—The Rocking Turn—Cross Cuts.

THE Figures of which this chapter treats may be considered the highest attainments in skating, notwithstanding that some of them may come more naturally to the young skater than one or two of those that have been described earlier.

INSIDE BACKWARDS

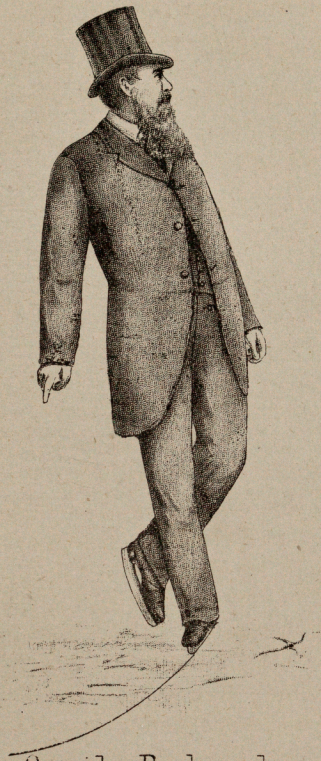
Is never used except as part of another figure; * it will be best learned in acquiring figure 3.

OUTSIDE BACKWARDS.

Having, in a previous chapter, been instructed to go backwards on both feet, you will have observed that, when the S figure is attained, one foot rests on the inside edge and the other on the outside, and you were desired to rest most on that foot which was on the outside edge. By carrying that practice a little further, you will find by degrees that you are able to lift the other foot from the ice entirely, and attain a backward circle outside on one foot.

When you can complete the circle on either foot, you must learn to alternate. The common mode of doing so is, as soon as you push back, lift the foot you do it with, rising

* This opinion must be held to be subject to the modification expressed in speaking of "inside forwards."



Outside Backwards

(Face Page 59)

on to the other with a straight knee; when you wish to change, set down the raised foot, and take the stroke from the other, lifting it as soon as you have done so. The objection to this mode of doing it is, that while you are taking each stroke, both feet are on the ice together for a time, which entirely destroys the effect, and makes the movement appear laboured and awkward, whereas, when done in the correct way, it is perhaps the most beautiful that can be accomplished.

The mode I allude to, when well performed, is as follows: The skater, when one semi-circle is complete, and he wishes to change, sets the raised foot, with the toe turned well out, down on the ice, crossed in behind the other, and rises upon it without apparent stroke of any kind; the front foot is raised and carried slowly backwards with a sweep, so as to get behind in time for setting down, at the end of the semi-circle, crossed as before; then the other is lifted, also with a slow sweep round, to be set down behind in its turn. While sweeping the raised foot round, the head follows the movement, that is, looking over the left shoulder while circling on the right foot, and *vice versâ*. Turning the head not only assists the curve, but enables you to see where you are going, and thus avoid collisions, which might otherwise be very frequent with backward skating. The beauty of this figure depends on its total absence of effort, the impetus being got merely by the setting down of the feet, and the correct balance of the body.

The way to learn it is (Diag. II.) to try to walk backwards, as slowly as ever you like, setting down each foot alternately crossed in behind the other, with the toe much turned out, and the skate always on the outside edge. You must not attempt any circle at first, or to dwell on either foot, but when one is set down, raise the other, and at once

put it down behind. At first you will naturally lean forward, and then the skate will not be set down on the outside edge, but as you gain confidence and begin to walk quickly backwards, the body will get upright and the iron will naturally take the outside edge; and when that stage is reached, you have only to dwell a little longer on each foot to attain circles. This beautiful movement is not so difficult to learn as it looks, but whatever trouble it costs him, the skater will not regret it. Many may consider the opinion erroneous, but I am quite satisfied that it is easier to learn outside back than outside forward, and that the former should be taught first.

Flying Mercury.

This is a very large backward circle on the outside edge, and it has received its name from the attitude, which, however, does not need to be a very striking one. I consider this the same figure as the "Spiral," only backwards instead of forwards. Indeed, formerly, when backward movements were not practised, the name was applied to the large forward circle.

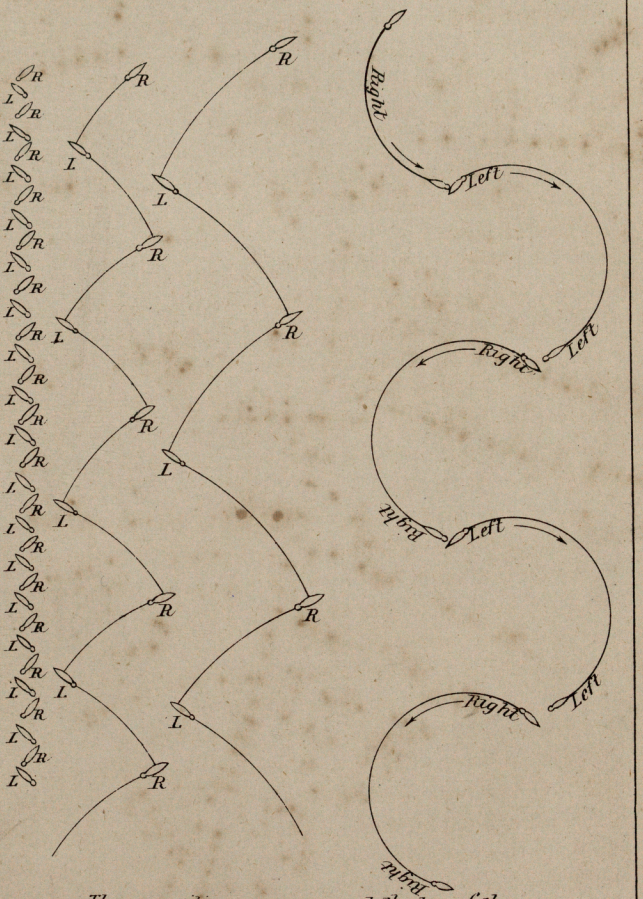
The figure is performed by taking a few forward strokes with great force, wheeling or springing suddenly round on to the outside edge, and endeavouring to describe as large a circle backwards as you can. The difficulty is to get round so quickly as not to lose force, and then to attain the balance, which, from the size of the circle, is a very delicate one. To make the wheel requires great confidence, and that is only got by practice.

There are several modes of getting round on to the outside. One way is to use the outside 3, which will be found described a little further on. As soon as the second half of the 3 figure commences, that is, just as you are getting on to the inside backwards, set down the other foot on the outside

DIAGRAM 2.

Learning Outside Backward

1st Stage 2nd Stage 3rd Stage Perfect Roll



These positions commence at the top of the page.

edge, and rise upon it. It is still simpler to do it by the reverse Figure 3, as you get at once on to the outside edge; but these will hardly give a large enough circle, and it can be done thus, with more force than by either of the other modes :—After a few strokes forward at full speed, bring the feet together, spring up and wheel round, at the same time rising on one foot and catching the balance. In which ever of these you employ, the motion must be quicker than its description, or, I fear, you will lose too much force.

While you are learning so difficult a balance, you are at liberty to use your arms and unemployed leg to the fullest, spreading them as you please, to get the balance, but when the figure is acquired, the attitude had better be restrained to that of the "Spiral."

The inside edge is also sometimes used for the "Mercury," but it is neither so difficult nor so graceful.

The Straight Line

Is very similar to the last figure, but you have to catch the balance without leaning on to either edge of the skate, keeping on the flat of the iron, and this carries you back in a straight line. As the skate takes no hold of the ice, this balance is extremely difficult to acquire, and many good skaters can attain it only with both feet on the ice, in line toe to heel.

The Cork Leg.

This, like the "Sea Serpent," is a figure in which, by alternate outside and inside curves, you progress on one foot without ever setting down the other; but the motion is differently executed, and it is done backwards.

The body is inclined slightly forwards, and the impetus is derived by twisting the ancle so as throw the skate on to the inside and outside edge alternately, describing very

small curves on each. The raised foot is held motionless behind the other, and takes so little part in the figure that it might be dispensed with altogether—whence the name. It may, however, be done with large sweeps in the manner of the Sea Serpent.

FIGURE 3 (Diagram III.)

This is described by means of an outside roll forwards for half a circle, then changing to inside backwards on the same foot, without bringing down the other in any way.

The change is effected mainly by a swing of the body, and turning the head to the new direction, which, if the ancle is kept stiff, will change the edge of the skate to the inside back; the learner must therefore pay more regard to the balance of the body and the turn of the head than to the feet. In learning, he will feel constrained to make the first curve of the figure a very small one, but as he improves, he must endeavour to extend it to the full semi-circle.

When he can do it on each foot separately, he must learn to do it alternately; after completing the figure on one foot, going freely off on to the other, and so travelling about the pond where he pleases, as he does in Rolling. After that he must learn to control his movement so that he can make the figure finish exactly in the spot where it commenced, as that is necessary for combined figure skating, though the 3 somewhat loses its form by the change. To practise for this, he must follow the same directions as given for Figure 8.

The 3 was introduced in the last century as the "heart-shaped figure," and was then thought so difficult as to be quite the acmé of skating accomplishment.

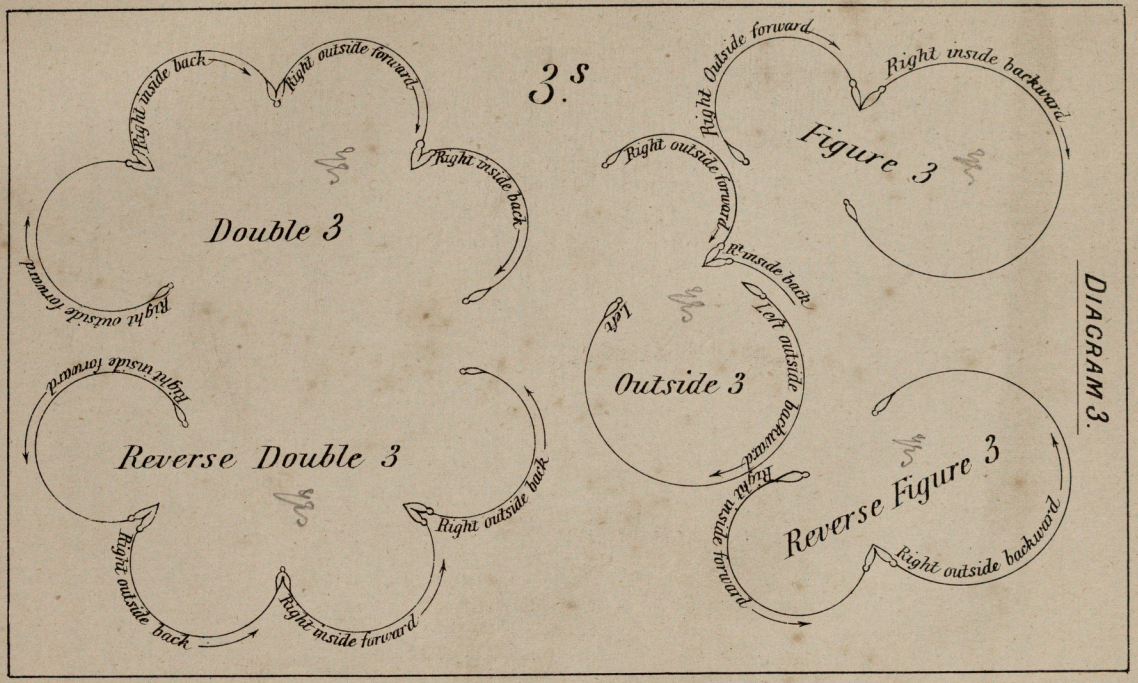

3.s
Right inside back
Right outside forward
Right inside back
Double 3
Right outside forward
Right inside back
Reverse Double 3
Right outside back
Right inside forward
Right outside back
Right Outside forward
Right inside backward
Figure 3
Right outside forward
Rt inside back
Left
Outside 3
Left outside backward
Right inside forward
Reverse Figure 3
Right outside backward

DIAGRAM 3.

Outside 3 (Diagram III.).

Figure 3 is also sometimes done all on the outside edge. You start outside forward, say on the right, and the instant you have made the wheel for inside back, put down the left foot outside and execute the second half of the 3. This figure is much used in the club figures.

After you can do it with confidence, a large and bold figure can be performed with it. Some skaters make the wheel in the air instead of on the ice; that is, they leap from outside forward on the one foot to outside back on the other. It may be well to be able to do it in every way, but really finished skaters never leap.

Figure 3 Reverse (Diagram III.).

This is not so often practised as the former, but it should be acquired, as it assists other figures. It commences with inside forwards for half a circle, when the body is quickly turned, so as to complete the figure with outside backwards on the same foot, and without setting down the other.

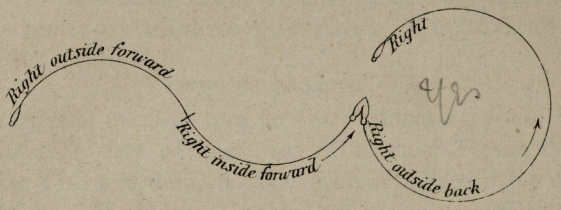
The turns from outside back to inside forward, and from inside back to outside forward, also give varieties of the 3 figure. The latter of these is an extremely difficult turn, perhaps the most difficult there is, and it is indispensable to acquiring the double 3.

The Shamrock (Diagram IV.).

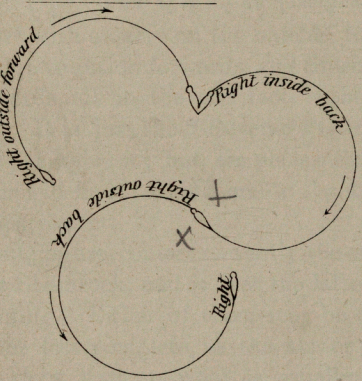
This figure is so named on account of its consisting of three circles, each about two-thirds completed. After a very full Figure 3, on completing the inside backward circle, change the edge of the skate to the outside, and finish the figure with a circle of outside backwards—thus executing

DIAGRAM 4.

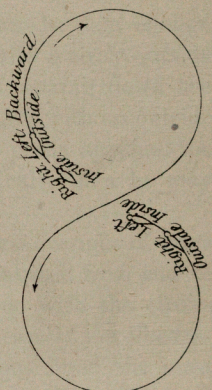
The Q Figure.



The Shamrock



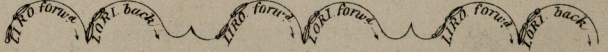
The Canadian 8



Continue ad libitum in the same tracks without changing the relative positions of the feet.

The Canadian Grape Vine

R. right L. left O. outside edge I. inside edge



for 1st turn throw back the right shoulder. For 2nd turn bring forward the right shoulder.

Q D. Short outside back, short inside back, full outside forward.

Reverse Q A. Full inside forward, short outside back, short inside back.

Reverse Q B. Full inside back, short outside forward, short inside forward.

Reverse Q C. Full outside forward, short inside back, short outside back (which turns give, in a very mutilated form, my "Shamrock.")

Reverse Q D. Full outside back, short inside forward, short outside forward.

These variations are good practice for learning facility of changing edge, but as figures they are quite inferior to the original Q.

Double 3 (Diagram III.)

After completing a Figure 3, repeat it on the *same* foot without setting down the other; this requires you to change from inside backwards at once to outside forwards, and it is very difficult. The skater who is sufficiently advanced to attempt it requires no directions. It is not enough, however, that he succeeds in making all the changes, and gets through the figure anyhow, probably dwelling only for an instant on the first turn of the second 3; each semi-circle must be full, or the beauty of the figure is lost, and it becomes a mere spin.

When the skater once attains the Double 3, he can triple it, or even more.

Double 3 Reverse (Diagram III.)

This can also be done, and, when once attained, can be continued almost *ad libitum*; but the turn from outside backward to inside forward is rather too much of a jerk to

be very pretty, and therefore this figure, though decidedly difficult, is quite inferior to the preceding.

Some figures have appeared from time to time in the pages of the *Field*, which seem well worthy of a place in any work on skating.

A "Member of the Skating Club" (the London one probably, though the designation is vague), after describing the Double 3, says:

This figure has lately been varied by changing the edge at the end of the Double 3 from the inside to the outside, and this, throwing you on a different tack, enables you to do the double backwards, and so on as long as sufficient steam can be kept up. To do this perfectly, either backwards or forwards, and on both legs, will, I think, give country skaters something to try: (see Fig. 1, Diagram VI.)

This is just uniting the "Double 3" to the "Double 3 Reverse" by interposing the peculiar turn that is required in the "Shamrock" exactly as I have described in uniting the Single 3 to the 3 Reverse. To unite figures that were already double is more than doubly difficult, and I had never heard of it before. Were it possible to change from *inside* back to *inside* forwards, the two figures would be exactly united without any turn not strictly belonging to them; but I believe it to be almost impossible, and even the mode described is certainly abundantly difficult to try anyone's powers, while it is evidently quite a possible combination of turns.

Another contributor to the *Field*, signing merely "A Skater," gives three Canadian figures which he had seen, and of which also I give diagrams.

No. 3 (Fig. 3, Diagram VI.) commences at A on the right foot outside forward; the three semi-circles are done before changing the foot, the whole figure being forwards; the left foot is put down at B in the style of the crossing roll, and the same turns repeated on it.

DIAGRAM 5.

Figure 3 and Reverse 3 united on one foot.

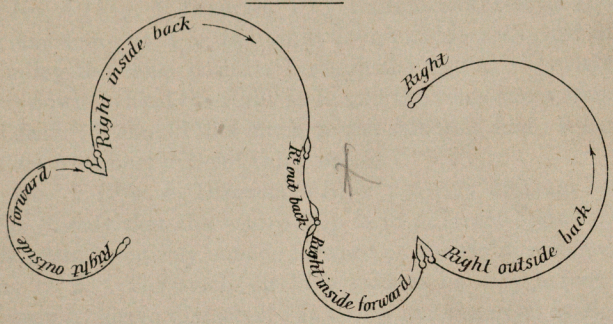
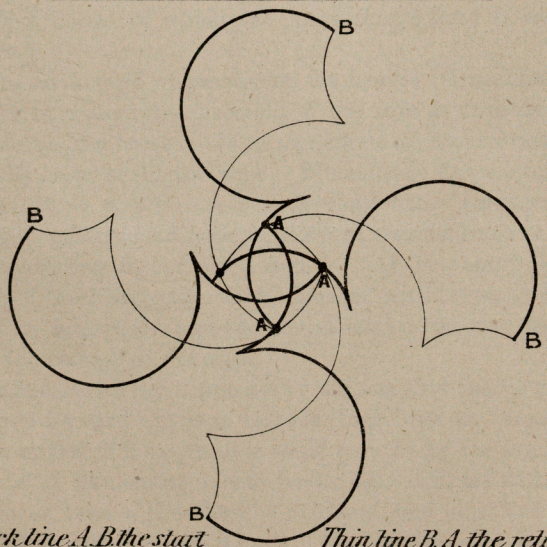


Figure 3 combined for 4 Skaters.



Thick line A.B the start *Thin line B.A. the return.*

This figure is evidently a good one, and well worth practising for.

No. 4 (Fig. 4, Diagram VI.) represents the same figure commencing at A on the right foot, outside back, and continuing the same position through the figure. The left is put down behind the right at B, and the same turns accomplished. I should like much to see this well done; it looks to me the most difficult thing out.

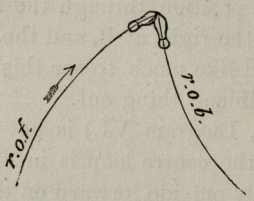
No. 5 (Fig. 5, Diagram VI.) is not very different from No. 3, only that the centre loop is in different lines. The diagram is entirely outside forward on the right, commencing at A. The small circle is said to be only a foot or fifteen inches in diameter. It seems quite as good as No. 3—nothing to choose between them.

Figures 3, 4, and 5, Diagram VI., are all varieties of the "loop" figure, of which the most simple form is seen in figure 2.

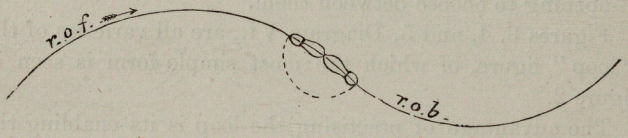
The advantage of practising the loop is its enabling the skater to change the direction of the iron at pleasure from the curve of a large circle to the curve of a small one, and equally from small to large. When once this power has been got, it may be used to develope other varieties and almost endless combinations of loops, besides being a great aid to skating in concerted figures. All the figure 3s, the Qs and the Shamrock may be finished with loops, or a loop may be interposed between the execution on the one foot and the change to the other.

It had long been supposed by skaters that the turn from outside forward direct to outside back was an impossible turn, or that if done at all it could only be by the interposition of a momentary inside back; this difficult turn has, however, been without doubt achieved, and must now rank among regular skating figures. Mr. Vandervell in his work

demonstrated its possibility under the questionable name of the "rocking turn," and had got the length of doing it by making the back part of the figure almost at right angles to the forward part, thus—



it still apparently remains to be done in a full sweep following the same general directions thus—



Some letters in the *Field* have since developed another form in which this same turn can be accomplished in an extremely pretty figure which has been called the "cross cut."

Figure 1, Diagram VII., shows the simplest form of the figure. It will be observed that the centre turn may be either convex or concave, still it is alleged by "A Country Skater," who first introduced it to the *Field*, that whatever the curve, it is still on the outside edge. This is not easy of belief, and my impression still is that the skater deceives himself, and that it is only when the iron follows one of the two upper dotted lines that it really is on the outside. Mr. Witham, however, who is certainly very high authority, seems to think otherwise.

Figures 2, 3, and 4 are the same, so skated that the first

"FIELD" FIGURES.

Figure 1.

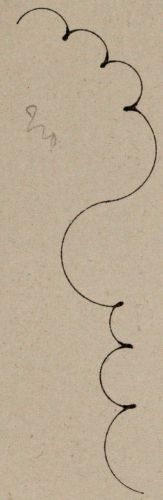


Figure 2.

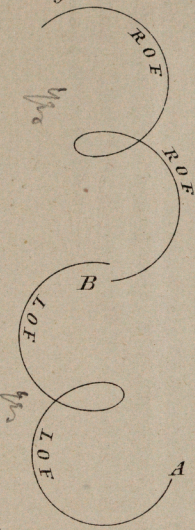


Figure 3.

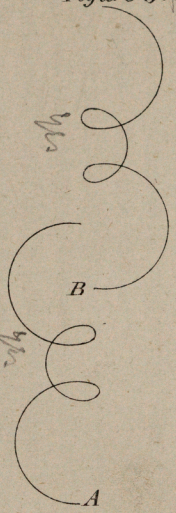


Figure 4.

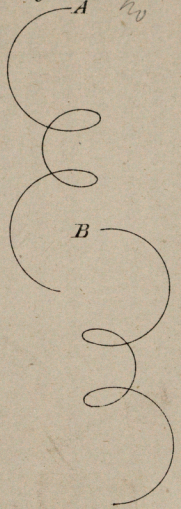


Figure 5.

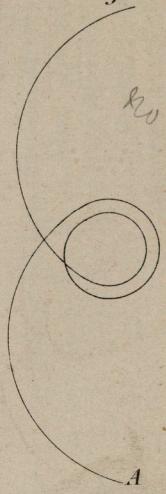


DIAGRAM 6.

Right from A. forward.
Left from B. forward.

Right from A. backward. Right from A. forward.
Left from B. backward.

and third curves intersect each other, and each of them shows a different curve for the intermediate; all said to be skated on the outside edge.

Figure 5 shows three "cross cuts," repeated without putting down the other foot, and figure 6 shows cross cuts alternated with loops which "A Member of the Skating Club" says he has accomplished, and which is certainly a beautiful figure.

I cannot pretend to give instructions for acquiring figures undreamed of in my better days, and which I cannot myself now hope to touch, but skaters sufficiently accomplished to try these have reached the degree of "magister artis" and are beyond the sphere of my instructions.

The natural result of the limited space available in the "ice rink" has been to develope figure skating in a high degree, but to develope it only in the direction of very small figures. For this purpose it will be observed that Canadian skaters have adopted irons of greater curve than we use, and their whole style of performance is minute, with frequent involutions of the feet, rapid turns, and small circles. The full sweeps and large figures, which are most admired with us, seem to have no place with them, and the consequence is that attitude is less considered by them, and is generally faulty. They have to change it so quickly that it never has time to come right.

CHAPTER VI.

SEQUENCE OF LESSONS—FIGURES FOR LADIES.

As in the preceding instructions, I have not attempted to describe the figures in such sequence as ought to be followed in learning them, it may be desirable to give learners, and particularly ladies, a few hints as to their most advisable course of practice.

The first instruction is how to get the skates under command (p. 29), and by degrees to strike out, the length of stroke increasing with her proficiency. When she has learned to time her strokes evenly, she may occasionally, when she has gained impetus, bring her feet together and run in that way for a considerable distance. She should also, at this stage, practise for confidence in turning.

The next lesson is to move forward swiftly and freely without apparent striking (p. 32).

The next lesson is to do the very same thing backwards (p. 34).

The next practice I suggest is one of the very best for giving command of the iron—namely, walking backwards, setting down the feet always in the dancing master's fifth position (p. 59), Diagram 2.

When the learner has mastered the above, she is sufficiently grounded to make trial of a variety of movements, which will be found less monotonous, and even more effectual than adhering rigidly to one lesson.

For instance, outside backwards, which by the mode taught (p. 59, Diagram II.), heterodox as the opinion may seem to many old skaters, is really easier than forwards.

DIAGRAM 7

FIELD FIGURES

The Cross Cut

Figure 1.

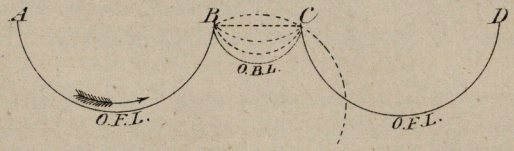


Fig 2.

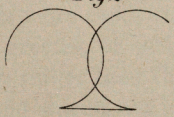


Fig 3.

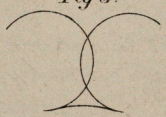


Fig 4.

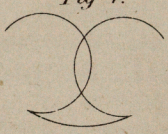


Fig 5.

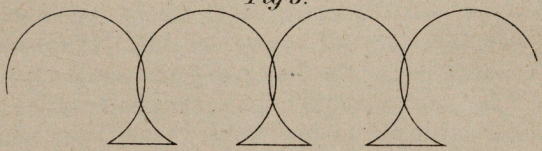
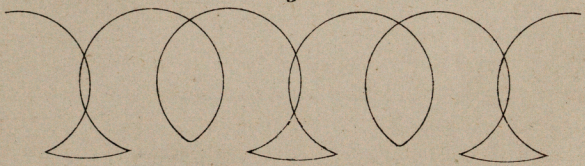


Fig 6.



Outside forwards (p. 46).
Figure S (p. 34).
Treading the Circle (p. 35).

The next stage of progress beyond these is to make the outside backwards and forwards in the style called "rolling," Diagram I., and in the still more complete form of Figure 8 (p. 54).

And if beyond this, Figure 3 can be attained, or possibly the Shamrock, I should say the acmé of female accomplishment had been reached; for those figures in which the motion is more rapid and violent, or in which the hazard of falls is greater, or which recommend themselves by their difficulty rather than their grace, are decidedly unsuited for ladies, and should not be attempted.

Nothing that I have recommended above, is beyond female attainment. I have seen on the Glasgow Club pond two ladies doing Figure 8 in concert (Salutation, p. 76), quite beautifully; and one graces the pond who adds to that both the forward and backward roll, in perfect time and attitude, and is rapidly attaining "Figure 3," the "S," and "Treading the Circle;" while several others are making very hopeful progress in outside.

CHAPTER VII.

RAPIDITY IN SKATING.

The New Championship.

One of the most notable skating events of the last few years has been the institution of a National Skating Association, under the joint presidency of the Duke of Devonshire and the Earl of Leicester.

In the meantime the objects of the society are somewhat narrow, as it confines itself to the encouragement of speed, and the securing of accurate records of performances. But probably, when standards of proficiency in speed have been established, the Association may turn its attention also to the higher developments of the art.

The means adopted for attainment of the objects now in view are, the institution of a championship; and prize race meetings, where the distances shall be accurately measured, and the time be exactly recorded.

Undoubtedly there has been a very exaggerated popular belief in the wonderful rate of speed attainable by a good skater; and it was very desirable that the real truth should be brought out, through recorded facts not admitting of dispute. It is to be hoped this end will now be attained, and that in the records of skating races in charge of the Association, we may hear nothing of courses being "about" some given distance, or of distances rendered uncertain by the "shifting of tubs" at the turning points; but that we may have in all cases the exact distance actually run, and the exact time taken in doing it. Besides these facts, the condition of the ice must be noted, and the direction and

force of the wind; for without these the record will be of little value for comparison with events elsewhere.

During last winter the Association held several meetings, and so far the results attained confirm, with curious exactness, the statements regarding speed, published even in the second edition of this work in 1868, which were—

"I believe a mile in three to three and a half minutes is very quick work—even one in four minutes is not bad."

The fastest time I have seen recorded was that at Hendon on 26th January this year, where Dewsberry skated one and a half miles in 4min. 53⅕sec., which is 3min. 15⅖sec. for a mile, and Bone did it in two-fifths of a second more.

At Newmarket, on 12th Dec., 1879, Palmer's time was at the rate of 3min. 40sec., and on the following day there were scores of about the same. At Welney and Surfleet the results were very similar. At present therefore all between three and three and a half minutes may be accounted excellent racing speed, and even "Fish" Smart, who gains more races than any one else, has no record so low as three minutes; but that rate is certain ere long to be reached and even surpassed.

As regards comparison between running and skating, probably in short distances, such as spins of 200 yards, the runner might hold his own, as the skater can hardly get up his full speed quickly; but, for longer distances, the skater has it all his own way.

The best professional running time I have seen recorded, for a whole mile, was in the dead heat between Richards and Lang at Manchester, 19th August, 1865—4min. 17⅕sec.; while skate racing has already beaten that time by more than a minute.

The proper stroke for racing is taken from the inside edge, starting on the outside, but on so slight a curve as

almost immediately to be straight and on the flat of the iron, coming over to the inside edge for next stroke. The longer the stroke, the better, but there can be no standard in this; each skater must find out for himself the length of stroke he can keep up to its fastest speed, taking the new stroke the instant the speed of the old one is in the least failing; which will probably be in from eight to twelve yards. If he can make it longer, so much the better; but it takes great force of propulsion, even on the best ice and without opposing wind, to do twelve yards without the speed slackening towards the end of the stroke.

For this kind of skating, irons that are nearly straight and somewhat broad on the flat, and of uniform breadth, will be found best.

Where distance can be got for a straight course without turns, there is great advantage in it. Scrambling round tubs, both loses pace and risks fouling; but it is difficult in this country, with our short and uncertain frosts, always to get favourable conditions.

So far I think the Association has not tried long courses, for these are still more difficult to get; on that point my statement was, "for endurance, fourteen to sixteen miles in an hour, though skaters practising for running may occasionally exceed that." This, I am inclined to think now, is rather over the mark. Suppose the first two miles done at the rate of 3½min., the next five might average 4min, then four at 4½, and lastly three at 5. The hour would be exhausted for fourteen miles, and it would be a hard task to keep up these rates for a whole hour, and still harder to save minutes enough out of them for a couple of miles more.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERTED SKATING.

The Satellite—The Salutation—Combination of 3s—London Club Figures—Glasgow Club Figures—Conclusion.

Everyone who has mastered the detached figures should next endeavour, by special practice with companions, to acquire figure skating in concert. The object is, to combine various movements in any arrangement agreed on, so timed that all the skaters, working from one common centre, interweave the figures and circles without collision; and when this is skilfully done the effect is beautiful.

The figures most used are Figure 3s, and back and forward outside circles and half-circles. They require to be executed with great precision, and the skater must have such perfect control of his movements as to be able to make any change at any instant, or on any spot required. Wooden balls are usually placed on the ice for guides.

The Satellite.

Any convenient number may join in this. Suppose a circle on the ice of about nine feet diameter: the skaters take their places round the outside of this circle at equal distances from each other; a ball or some other mark must be placed a yard out from each position. The skaters all start at once, describing the centre circle on the outside edge, and in the same direction. On completing the circle to within one ball of his starting point, each skater goes off on the other foot, also on the outside, thus making a diverging circle round the ball he stopped at. All complete these

satellite circles at the same instant, and start again as before round the centre one, each stopping one ball short of his last, and making a second satellite. The figure is complete when each skater has gone round every ball in its turn, but it may be continued *ad libitum*. This figure may be varied by executing Figure 3s for the diverging or satellite circles.

The Salutation.

This is the Figure 8 in concert, and requires two or four. Two stand face to face, about two feet apart—both start at once, say on the right foot, for an outside circle. In starting, they pass each other on the right side, going opposite ways. On their respective circles being complete, they are again face to face, but in changed positions; and start on the left foot, passing each other on the left side, so that each skater describes his companion's circle the reverse way.

When four do it, the second pair describe their Figure 8 at right angles across the other, starting at the moment when the first pair are hardly halfway round their circle.

All should commence on the same foot. In the days of minuets, this figure was performed with a great deal of pomp and gesture—with touching of hands and lifting of beavers, from which it derived its name; but all that sort of thing may now be dispensed with.

In this figure also, 3s may be substituted for circles: the 3s are usually done so that the finish of the 3 brings you back to the starting point, in which case you repeat on the other foot again, finishing at the starting point, and going on over the same lines.

You may, however, so arrange that the first 3 takes you out and the second brings you home, as shown in the diagram of 3s for four skaters, which is one of Mr. Cartwright's figures: (Diagram V.)

As I am not acquainted with the performances of the London Club, I cannot do better than quote Mr. Cartwright in the *Field* on the subject of the combined figures usually practised by that club :—

As in dancing, there are five figures practised by the Club. Here, however, all natural comparison between the two ends. It is a mistake to call these "figures" quadrilles. If I state of what strokes each of these consist, I think my readers will need nothing but the light of their own experience to help them to a perfect knowledge of what they are, and will only require the ability for all the strokes, and practice in companies, to be able to perform them. They are at present, taken in themselves, unquestionably the most elegant of any combinations it has been my fortune to see. When well skated, every stroke being perfectly timed and made with that perfect ease and never-failing accuracy which industrious practice and frequent opportunity give, the scene from a spectator's point of view is charming. Individually, to the skaters it might seem that a "3" or an "8," whether done in concert or alone, would have just the same measure of attraction and furnish the same amount of pleasure. It is not so, however, and, though each one's motion is perfectly independent of the others, the eye is quite cognisant of the combined effect, and the pleasure is greatly enhanced. Taking the figures in rotation, it will be seen that there is a gradually ascending scale. The figures are done on the right and left foot in every case. Sometimes two engage in them, sometimes four. The latter is the proper number, and any addition should not be attempted. For illustration, I may suppose that a circle of fifteen yards diameter or more has been cleared. The four skaters face each other at right angles and nearly equidistant. Each one starting on the right does the entire figure as set down below ; it terminates in the centre, and he repeats on the left leg, arriving at the same point again for the next figure.

FIGURE I.—Cross over by figure "3" on right foot, and back again on left foot.

FIGURE II.—THE SINGLE BACK.—Figure "3" right foot, outside edge back, and figure "3" to place.

FIGURE III.—THE DOUBLE BACK.—Figure "3" outside edge back; figure "3" outside edge, back again to place.

FIGURE IV.—Figure "3" outside edge, back, and change to outside edge forward to place.

FIGURE V.—THE BACK ENTIRE.—Figure "3" outside edge, back to

the turning place in the "3," then outside edge back for a complete circle on the other foot.

These are the figures. Practice alone can teach skaters how to go through them together. Diagrams drawn with mathematical accuracy would not practically benefit them. Being once theoretically known, the only further help is practical experience. Full figures have the best appearance. It is only by skating together that four skaters can know each other's "time," and how far they will allow the "3" to carry them. Figure III. is the most beautiful of the set, the repeated "3" and the two changes to the outside edge all being made at the same moment of time, and all being at the same distance from the centre, so that the appearance presented is that of four skaters describing one backward circle, are very pleasant. Of course the charm of this kind of skating depends upon everything being done well; any *contretemps* spoils the whole. The strokes are only the strokes known and practised by the best skaters all over the country, and the combination of them into figures is not difficult. Skill is required—perhaps I ought rather to say combined practice—to calculate so well that on each return to the centre (and it will be seen that these returns are numerous) the right spot shall be reached at the right moment of time, so that the succeeding four strokes of the four skaters shall carry them round each other without touching, but still quite close. Herein lies perhaps the greatest difficulty, and certainly the greatest beauty.

I hope my readers will perfectly understand the above descriptions; one or two of them, however, might have more than one meaning, and I am not myself quite sure of them all.

These figures have probably been since considerably expanded, and the skater who has arrived at this stage of progress would do well to refer to Mr. Vandervell's book for the London Club figures as now practised.

The concerted figures skated by the Glasgow Club in its palmiest days (*Eheu! fugaces annos*) were the following, performed by four skaters so timing their movements, that while two were crossing each other at the centre the other two were at the outer points of the figure. I will describe the movements of only one of the four performers, as the simplest way.

Suppose the skaters to be standing at north, south, east, and west, facing each other and about a yard apart; a ball is placed in the centre, and one about a yard behind each skater, as guides for the circles.

1st Figure—Cross 3s.

The man at north skates a large common 3 out towards the south on the right foot, finishing his figure in the centre; then skates one towards the north on the left foot, finishing in his original position in the centre, facing south. Meantime, the man at south had started simultaneously in the opposite direction, the two always crossing each other in the centre, by the right first and then by the left, while those at east and west started just as the first two had reached their outer limits.

2nd Figure—Half Backs.

The man at north starts for "*outside* 3," towards the south —that is, starts right outside forward, instantly changing to left outside back; on reaching his southern limit he changes to right outside forward, a semi-circle bringing him back to the centre. He then starts left outside forward towards the north, instantly changing to right outside back, and from his northern limit returns by a forward half-roll on the left, finishing again in his original position, facing the south; the others doing their corresponding figures.

Sometimes this was varied by making the return a second half back instead of a half forward roll, in which case I observe it corresponds with the London Club's "once back."

3rd Figure—Mixed Backs.

The man at north skates south a full outside circle on the right foot, finishing in the centre and starting towards north, on the left outside forward, instantly changed to the right

back, on which he does a full circle; as he reaches the centre the left is put down behind, and a half-circle, left back, takes him again to the southern limit, from which a half-circle, on the right forward, brings him again to the centre. Then a complete circle, on the left outside, towards the north, then right outside forward changing to left outside back towards the south, finishing in the centre; then right outside half back, towards the north, finishing with a half-circle, left outside forward; the other skaters corresponding.

4TH FIGURE—8S.

Outside forward circle, first on right foot, then on left; a very simple figure, as a relief to the last complicated one.

5TH FIGURE—FULL BACKS.

The man at north skates towards south, starting right outside forward, instantly changing to left outside back, and doing a complete circle. On reaching the centre the right is put down behind, and a complete circle towards north finishes again in the centre; the others doing their corresponding figures.

6TH FIGURE—SHAMROCKS.

The man at north starts towards south for a full figure 3 by right outside forward, changing to right inside back, and completing the circle; on reaching the centre, without putting down the other foot, he changes the edge of the iron and makes a complete circle towards north, on the right outside back, finishing again in the centre. From the position at this point it was not possible to repeat on the left foot, and the performance usually ended abruptly rather before this point was reached, through inaccurate timing. The proper conclusion of the figure, from that point, would

be left inside forward, toward south, changing to left outside back, and completing the circle; then, at the centre, turning the edge without setting down the right, finish with a full circle, left inside back.

Sometimes double 3s and other variations were tried, but the combinations as I have described them were the most approved, and they are quite difficult enough to require a great deal of patient practice in concert, to time them accurately enough to avoid collisions and checks.

Some of them seem the same as the London figures, or nearly so; and I believe the original knowledge of such combinations came from London, though in process of time the figures got somewhat modified.

I now find that my pleasant and self-imposed task has reached its conclusion. Deficient, no doubt, in some respects, and imperfect in others, I may have omitted many figures—from ignorance, or from intention; but I can safely say that the skater who masters all that I have described, if he unite, as he can hardly fail to do, a certain degree of freedom and grace in his carriage, may well esteem himself an adept. There is nothing on skates that he may not freely attempt afterwards; and he may employ his inventive faculties in working out new evolutions and combinations for himself.

An advantage possessed by this pastime over most others, I did not formerly advert to; yet it is no small matter to those whose scholastic or business pursuits fully occupy the brief daylight of a winter's day, that skating requires no such accurate vision as to prevent its being enjoyed at night, unless, indeed, the night is dark. Nay, I am not prepared to say that it does not acquire higher zest, and is not followed with keener relish, when it comes as the

relaxation after the day's toil. In the clear and bracing atmosphere of a frosty night, when

> ——— The floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold,

such pastime will bring both health and pleasure to the thought-worn and the weary.

Moreover, we have the chances of the moonlight.

> ——— Fair Cynthia, she who never sleeps,
> But walks about high heaven all the night,

seems particularly partial to doing so when our frosts are keenest; and never does the "smile of the moon" give us more "tender greeting" than when her full round orb rises over the trees that fringe the banks of some pleasant sheet of frozen water.

My days of enthusiasm are sadly on the wane—more's the pity; but in my "calida juventa," many a time and oft have I spent long and pleasant hours of moonlight on the ice-bound waters, with no company save my own thoughts.

In such solitude, what feelings and emotions stir the heart, exhilarated by this glorious exercise, I will not attempt to tell, seeing that a great master has done so before me; and how better can I conclude than by giving them to the reader in their true and fitting utterance? And then I may say, though not in the implied, at least in the literal, sense—*Finis coronat opus.*

* * * * *

> In solitude, such intercourse was mine;
> 'Twas mine among the fields both day and night,
> And by the waters, all the summer long.
> And in the frosty season, when the sun
> Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
> The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
> I heeded not the summons: happy time
> It was indeed for all of us; for me

It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six. I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel,
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures—the resounding horn,
The pack loud-chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle: with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while the distant hill
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star;
Image that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain: and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the Earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

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